# **1916**

**March 18th, 1916 -** Still out at rest camp but hear that the 49th. is soon to go into the Ypres Salient. General Alderson addresses us and tells us what to expect. It seems that you get sniped at with whiz- bangs in the Salient.

**March 20th -** We march to Poperinghe. Packs heavy for nothing is put on the transports. In the evening take a stroll round the town - a good sized place and little damaged by shell fire. The town is full of the Guards of various battalions, and it is curious to see all ranks only going round with those of equal rank. At night go to a show given by the “Fancies”, an Imperial troupe - a most excellent entertainment.

**March 21st -** Leave Poperinghe by train at 6:30 p.m. for Ypres. Everybody in high spirits and we sing the old and favourite choruses, a very mixed lot as usual - “If You Were the Only Girl,” “There’s a Long, Long Trail”, “She Married a Man . . .”, etc. But we are wondering what we are in for, for we know the reputation of the Salient. We know we can expect something different to the quiet and comfortable trenches we have lately held on the Kemmel front. On leaving the train we march through the ruins of Ypres, a ghostly looking place at night. Road from Ypres to the trenches in bad shape and blocked by transports and artillery. Imperial troops, as they pass us on their way out, let us know what to expect.“It’s a b - - - -, Canada,” they tell us, and we believe them. A long march, through mud, shell holes and along broken trench mats, and everybody is more or less exhausted when the front line is reached in the early morning.

I lose my way trying to find “B” Coy front, to which I am detailed as a signaller. Meet a C.M.R. working party and I ask them various questions regarding the lay-out of the trenches. The Sergeant in charge becomes suspicious and comes up and tells me it is his turn to ask a few questions - and he tells me not to hesitate in my replies. He then bombards me with about a dozen well-chosen questions, regarding Edmonton, Shorncliffe, the 49th., etc., which, had I been a German spy, I certainly would not have been able to answer. He is satisfied and I proceed on my way, irritated by questioning of the Sergeant, but realizing, on thinking the matter over, that he was right on the job. It is 5:30 a.m. before I eventually find the signalling dug out on the “B” Coy front. Stationed there with Cameron and Hall.

**March 22nd -** Trenches narrow, muddy and in bad shape. Many trench mats broken and under water. Few dug outs. No fires allowed for cooking rations, for smoke at once draws whiz-bangs. Rains most of the day. Conditions miserable but fellows keep cheerful. Hear that the German sniper, in his bird-cage opposite, shouted “Welcome Canadians,” last night, so the German Intelligence Department is evidently being kept well informed. He also told the fellows to keep their heads down for he was the best G - - d- - sniper on the Western front; he is stated to be a German American. Some shelling later in the day and two “D” Coy men are killed, one having his head blown off.

**March 23rd -** Wet, muggy weather continues. German sniper, in the birdcage, tries to get the fellows’ goat by waving a red flag. A Stokes Gun is brought up at night and used for the first time on our front. Casualties for the day - three men wounded by shrapnel. We are issued with a primus heater which proves a godsend, for it means hot meals.

**March 25th -** The 49th experiences its worst day since landing in France. We are shelled heavily in the afternoon and six men are killed and between twenty and thirty wounded. Two of the latter are not expected to live (they died later). Jimmie Thompson, whom the section will sadly miss, is among the killed. We leave the front line and go back to supports.

**March 26th -** With “A” Coy in support dug-outs in Maple Copse. A pretty sylvan spot and not much damaged by shell fire. Eight of us in the dug-out. A lively crowd and we have a merry evening.

**March 28th -** Get relieved by the Pats in the afternoon. The road shelled on our way out. Three of us take a sudden flop when a big fellow lands quite close - get splattered with mud. Pity the next hundred yards could not have been timed for some records might have been broken!

**March 30th -** On duty at night at the signalling station in the Transport lines. George Young (Sgt.) has some interesting yarns to tell of the West when he was a boy. Tells us how he once ran away from school and home, and hit the trail for Calgary, a several days ride, on his pinto pony.

**April 2nd -** Hear we are to return to the trenches on the Hooge front, which is to the left of where we were. Sergts. Edwards and Brouse go and look them over and return with the news that they are a good deal worse than the ones we vacated a few days ago.

**April 4th -** Return to the trenches; stationed with “C” Coy. Cameron, Hall and I in Hooge cellar with the “C” Coy Officers and their batmen - a cellar which at one time was occupied by the Germans. It is all that is left of what used to be Hooge Chateau. The entire roof has been strengthened by eighteen-inch planks placed on edge and supported by immense timbers - a real example of German thoroughness. On top there is a great pile of tumbled masonry so we feel secure from shell fire, unless one came through the entrance which faces the German lines. The trenches low and muddy, and there are no dugouts apart from the odd cubbyhole. No wire to speak of in front of the line and none can be staked there at night for trenches are so close that working parties in No Man’s Land are out of the question. Fritz has all the high ground and his snipers dominate our trenches.

**April 5th -** Hall, who broke a finger last night when he fell on a loose trench mat, leaves us and goes out of the line.

**April 6th -** Germans, from their trenches thirty yards distant, raid one of our advanced saps and capture four “C” Coy men. Raid takes place this morning just after the “stand-down” and it seems that our men were preparing something to eat and were quite unprepared. When they looked up they found themselves covered by the German rifles. Yeomens, for the moment unarmed, springs at the German Officer and tries to wrest his revolver from him, but gets shot through the stomach by a German N.C.O. The remaining four surrender and are taken back to the German trenches. Our men on the right meanwhile learn what is happening and open up fire. It is reported that a Fritz is killed and also one of our own men who is being escorted back across No Man’s Land.

German snipers very active and we have seven men killed during the day on the “C” Coy front. Trenches so low that you have to walk doubled up, for if a head is shown for a second it gets sniped at. Some of their snipers must have rifles set in clamps, to cover the low spots in our trenches, for men are shot before there is time for a rifle to be aimed. Hooge cellar is converted into a dressing station and soon is full of wounded. Some are suffering but you seldom hear a moan. Impossible to get them out until darkness falls.

A habit I have of foot-tapping lets me in for a good rating from Capt. Pinder, who is in charge of “C” Coy. He hears the tapping and at once concludes that Fritz is undermining the cellar - until he notices that toe of my boot moving up and down!

**April 7th -** “D” Coy takes over from “C” Coy. It seems that the companies only do two days at a time in this hellhole, but Cameron and I, as signallers, will have to be here for eight days. Well, we are certainly better off than the company men for we are dry and warm in the cellar, while they are wet and muddy. We get a Lewis machine-gun in the trenches for the first time - fellows elated and eager- to try it out. German snipers again active and we have more casualties. Go down for rations at night and foolishly do not wait until it gets properly dark. Get sniped at with whiz-bangs and think my last hour has come. Will know enough next time to wait until it gets dark.

On my return with the rations for Cameron and myself I sit down in the trench and rest awhile. Do not feel any too easy at being alone in these broken-down trenches so close to the German lines. Pitch dark and I get a scare when a star-shell goes up and I see a pair of eyes not four feet away looking right at me. Turns out to be one of our own dead who has been lifted from the trench on to the low parados. Before I reach Hooge cellar I fall on a slippery trench mat and cut my head on some corrugated iron. Capt. McLeod (George), in charge of “D” Coy, notices the blood on my face and he bandages my head up himself, the stretcher bearer being busy elsewhere. Heavy bombing at night.

**April 9th -** “C” Coy in the line again. Fellows are learning to keep their heads down and more under cover, but two more men get killed by snipers. A steel girder, buried under masonry, is taken advantage of by a Fritz sniper who ricochets bullets off it down the trench. Capt. Denning, an Imperial artillery officer who has come up to the front line to try and do some personal observation, pays a visit to the cellar. A particularly fine type - he has our admiration for coming up to these Hooge trenches when he does not have to do so. What is more he is not a young man. His venerable appearance however belies his nature, for he has a great stock of racy yarns, collected in his travels all over the world, and he proves vastly entertaining. Gives us a good idea of what the Boer War was like, though it was. naturally a picnic compared to this, he states. Tells us a good many little things which are worth remembering - how, for instance, during open warfare a mounted scout can tell if a wood is occupied by the enemy without getting too close to it. Before getting within accurate rifle fire he wheels his horse suddenly and gallops away, as though he has seen something. If he is shot at, the wood is occupied by the enemy - if not, then the wood can be regarded as unoccupied and the column can enter it.

**April 10th -** “D” Coy in the line once more; take over from “C” Coy in the evening. One of the batmen, as he is preparing supper for the Officers, upsets the primus heater and there is a fire. Everybody is on his feet in an instant, beating and stamping the flames out, for there could be no greater disaster than fire in this cellar.

We have almost succeeded in beating the flames out, when another batman picks up a full tin of gasoline, under the impression it is water, and pours it on the fire. The cellar is now one mass of flames, and hands and faces are scorched. It is every man for himself and there is a general rush, for the entrance. Impossible to save anything and nothing comes out of the cellar except the telephone. That would not have come out either, but above the general din and confusion I heard Capt. McLeod yell out, “Grab your phone, signaller.” Thankful there were no wounded in the cellar - they had been taken out as soon as it got dark - for it would have been impossible to get them out when the fire started and they would have been roasted alive. We plug the entrance to the cellar with sandbags in an effort to keep the smoke from getting out, but Fritz has spotted it already and opens up with his artillery.

Capt. McLeod tells Cameron and I to get in touch with H. Q. as soon as possible and we search around for the wires in order to tap into them. No easy matter for there is a perfect maze of wires outside the cellar, which has probably been used as a signalling station, both German and British, since the war started. Capt. McLeod assists us, and it is he who eventually finds the wires, which were buried under the trench.

**April 11th -** A cold day and raining. Spend miserable time in the trenches. No dug-out and no dry paper for messages. Nothing hot to eat or drink, no wash or shave for six days, boots on all the time, no sleep except what could be snatched for an odd hour or so, wet and cold and lousy - but we have got used to the lice long ago. German snipers again very active and if we move anywhere, we have to crawl around like rats; and now the cellar is burnt the wounded have to lie around in the mud until night before they can be taken out. Will be thankful when we can meet Fritz on an equal footing. Physical and mental misery is so great that one does not care what happens, yet every now and again something crops up which raises a good laugh.

Brigade sends up another message stressing the importance of securing a prisoner - we got a similar message yesterday. It is a pity Brigade cannot hear the reception these messages get up here. Would give my next pay if Brigade could spend twenty- four hours in these trenches, instead of in their comfortable quarters. Remove a sandbag at the entrance to Hooge cellar and look in - it is still one mass of flames. At night Capt. McLeod finds us a cubby-hole, where we can at least keep our pencils and paper dry.

**April 12th -** The last day in the line. A heavy bombardment and our trenches are smashed up badly but only three “D” Coy men get killed - not many when you consider the number of shells and trench mortars that landed amongst us and the mess our trenches are in. Cameron and I have a narrow escape in our cubby-hole, which gets a corner blown away. There is a feeling that Fritz may be coming over after this bombardment but he does not do so - just as well for we have exhausted the supply of bombs during the bombardment, but he would no doubt have got a good reception from the rifles. A lesson has been learnt from the raid of a few days ago and Fritz is not likely to catch us napping again. The Pats relieve us at night, and we wish them luck. Thankful to get out of the trenches after this eight-day nightmare. Cameron and I got out sans rifles, equipment, gas helmets etc., which are all cinders now in Hooge cellar. Glad to arrive in camp and get a wash, a hot meal and some sleep.

**April 14th -** Rude reveille at 4.00 a.m. when the camp gets shelled. We leave the huts hurriedly for the football field. Two men are killed and two wounded.

**April 15th -** The camp gets bombed at night but no casualties result.

**April 16th -** This sudden shelling and bombing at night, with the resultant rushes for cover, causes many funny situations and, before retiring for the night, we make merry over -what will probably happen during the small hours. But we are left in peace for no bombing or shelling takes place.

**April 21st -** We move back through Vlamentinge to a good rest camp. More bombing at night but no casualties; the German plane flying very low and we open up on it with our rifles, but with no apparent effect.

**April 27th -** Still out at rest camp. Football match in afternoon between the Officers and the Sergeants. The Colonel, playing in goal, remarks that this is our great opportunity to get something of our own back. Fun fast and furious. Every Officer, if he did not know his nick- name before the game started, certainly knew it before it ended - the Sergeants have known theirs for long enough. The Colonel gets shouts of “Attaboy Billy” and cheers whenever he effects a save in goal.

**April 28th -** Get reviewed by General Haig. Later in the day hear that Lee Enfields can be obtained for a five franc tip at a near-by clearing station for wounded. Got one in the evening and am glad to ditch my Ross. The Ross rifle is still our issue but the Colonel, in defiance of the powers- that-be in Ottawa, has told us long enough ago to get hold of Lee Enfields - and not to be too particular about how we get them. As a result nearly half the 49th have now got Lee Enfields, most of them scrounged. The 1st Division, since it was let down so badly by the Ross a year ago, has been issued with Lee Enfields, and when we happen to pass them on the march, they make unprintable remarks about the Ross and tell us to get a decent rifle.

**April 29th -** We return to the trenches to the right of Hooge - not sorry we are not going back there. Stationed with Radcliffe and young Low on the “A” Coy. front. Lt. MacQuarrie, Signalling Officer, and Sergt. Edwards visit our station, and while standing outside our dug-out a rifle grenade explodes on the parapet. They are both wounded and I get a scratch on the wrist myself. Lt. MacQuarrie is badly peppered and Sergt. Edwards helps him to a less exposed spot, before saying anything about being hit himself.

**April 30th -** Fine weather continues. German plane flies low over our trenches and is greeted with rapid fire. Hear that Fritz failed yesterday in a gas attack at Wulverghem.

**May 1st -** A violent bombardment of our trenches for about two hours in the late afternoon. Most of it directed on “A” Coy front and the trenches are soon a mess from the exploding shells and trench mortars. Our wire to Headquarters is broken and Radcliffe sets out to try and discover the break, but we are able to keep up communication through “C” Coy, in supports, where Pete Livingstone is on duty.

A shell explodes on the parapet opposite us and Newport, young Baldwin (“Montana”) and a new draft man, drop in a heap. Low and I leave the dug-out and find that Baldwin and Newport have both been badly hit in the head. The third man is dead, killed by concussion, for there is not a mark on him - he ran several steps down the trench and then back again before he dropped dead on the other two. There is no room in our dug-out for the two wounded, so I carry Baldwin to the Officers’ dugout, unoccupied at the time, and Low brings Newport along. Baldwin’s head injury is so serious that it is hopeless to try to bandage it up, and he dies in a few minutes. He did not appear to be suffering, yet he knew he was dying for just before the end he murmured, with his head on my knee, “This is the end of Baldy (his nickname), Goodbye” - I had been trying to tell him that he’d only got a good blightie. Newport is unconscious and Low and I bandage up his head as well as, we can until a stretcher-bearer comes along with better equipment (Newport died some weeks later in hospital.) Low and I return to the signalling dug-out, and Major Palmer puts his head in and gives us a word of encouragement.

This is the heaviest bombardment that our trenches have been subjected to and there is a feeling that Fritz will be coming over after the strafe, so it’s good to see stout Bill Harris in a corner of the bay, crouching there with his rifle on his knee; he’s as cool as a cucumber and ready to give a good account of himself. About dusk the bombardment suddenly stops and Fritz comes over all right, on the weakened “A” Coy front. But he gets a good reception for every uninjured man is on the firing step in an instant, and the wounded too who are able to climb up there. From “D” Coy on our right comes a strong enfilade fire (this enfilade fire during a German raid was a point the Colonel had always stressed in his lectures.) It is the rifles that have to be depended upon for bombs are scarce and there is not a machine-gun left in action on the "A" Coy. front. But the kibosh is put on the raid for only one German, an officer in the lead, gets into our trenches, and he is badly wounded and is taken prisoner. A German N.C.O. drops dead on our parapet.

The German prisoner, a good-looking man and undoubtedly a most gallant officer, is carried down to the Colonel’s dug-out on a trench chair. The Colonel questions him as his bullet wounds (five) are being treated, my brother acting as interpreter. He is first proffered a full glass of rum, at which he smiles, for he is too wise to have his tongue loosened in this manner, and it has to be much diluted with water before he even sips it.

He proves reticent, as was expected, but he admits that he did not expect to meet with any resistance after the battering our trenches had received - they expected to be able to come over without difficulty and return with a few shocked prisoners. He adds that his party had all been picked men who were used only for raiding trenches.

After the raid is over a working-party of the 48th., who had been working back in supports, come running up the communication trench, a lot of them armed only with picks and shovels. They are quite disappointed when told that the scrap is over. A shame that a fine outfit like the 48th. should be employed only as a Labour Battalion.

In discussing the raid afterwards, it is evident that there might have been a different end to it, had not so many of our fellows been armed with Lee Enfields, for Ross rifles everywhere were jamming and their owners reduced to impotent rage. What a crime was committed when the 2nd and 3rd Divisions were sent to France with the Ross rifle after the 1st Division, at cruel cost, had proved it to be useless.

Faces everywhere are jubilant over our little victory but our losses have been heavy - fifty-one dead and wounded, “A” Coy. being hit the hardest. Feel the loss of young Baldwin particularly for I happened to know him well. It was only the other night he was in our dug-out, telling us of the leave he had spent in England. He dearly loved a good saddle- horse - he had lived on the range - and he had spent part of his holidays riding over the Yorkshire moors, on a hired horse, in the neighborhood of Settle, a district I know well.

**May 3rd, 1916—**Corporal Batt, who has been in charge of the Signaling section since Lt. MacQuarrie and Sergt. Edwards were wounded, sends up a relief for Radcliffe, Lowe and myself, and we exchange the front line for Cumberland Dug-outs — the latter are comparatively quiet. In the afternoon take a trip down to Zillebecke Lake with Evans and Radcliffe and we have a swim, albeit a somewhat risky one if any shelling starts up.

**May 5th—**No sign of breakfast when we arrive at the kitchen dug- out the signaling section kitchen is now installed at Cumberland Dug- outs—yet Frenchy Raymond, the cook, is sitting outside. He comes in for some abuse until we realize that he is a very sick man. It seems that during the night he was overcome by the coke fumes of the brazier in the small dug-out, which he occupied alone, and when he woke up it was as much as he could do to crawl out into the open air.

The front line gets shelled in the evening and we have two men killed and a number wounded.

**May 6th—**Fine weather continues. A quiet day. After supper there are four or five of us outside the dug-out, yarning away and enjoying the calm, peaceful evening, when Livesay, who is one of the group, suddenly says, “‘Blighty for me, boys,” and he runs off in the direction of the dressing-station. We think he is pulling off a rather feeble joke, for the dug-out where we are is some distance from the front line, but we hear afterwards that he had been hit in the shoulder by a stray bullet.

**May 7th—**Get relieved in the evening by the Pats. No regrets at leaving the trenches, for the Battalion’s casualties, during this eight-day trip in the line, have amounted to eighty-two killed and wounded. This is the heaviest casualty list we have incurred so far while holding the line, though our trip on the Hooge sector last month was nearly as costly. Half the Battalion go down to Maple Copse and half to Railway Dug outs. We are now in **supports.**

**May 8th—**Stationed with Vaughan and Morton in Railway Dug- outs. A very quiet station, for hardly any messages are coming through. Rains all day. Nothing to do and feeling generally fed-up. Companies on working parties at night.

**May 12th—**Still at Railway Dug-outs. Get a “Gas Alarm” at 5:00 a.m. but it is called off soon after. A fine day and fellows can be seen outside the dug outs everywhere reading their shirts; will be glad to leave the line and get a change of clothing. A number of us have a bath in the small lake by the dug outs, which is deep enough to swim in. Apparently, we are spotted for a shell lands close by. We leave the lake hurriedly, for we know our fate if a shell lands in the water. Some more shells come over as we grab our clothes and run for cover. The incident affords some amusement for the troops outside the dug outs, for we don’t stop to put anything on. Maple Copse gets shelled in the afternoon and the signaling section has two more casualties.

Gertsch returns to our dug-out in the evening in very happy mood—a witness that the sergeants don’t drink all the rum. There’s a bruise on his forehead, and he says he got in a fight with a trench mat.

**May 15th—**Railway Dug-outs get shelled in the morning but there are no casualties and no damage is done — for every shell that finds any sort of a billet there must be a hundred or more, on either side of the line, which explode harmlessly. Get relieved shortly before midnight by the 52nd. Glad to leave the line behind us after sixteen days of it—eight in the front line and eight in supports. Shipman persuades us to take a “short-cut” across country on our way out, and he becomes very unpopular when we get lost. Wander around a good deal before we eventually find the camp. In tents, but not crowded.

**May 16th—**Spense, Lowe and I jump afreight train and go down to Poperinghe. Get a bath and a very welcome change of clothing, though the “clean” clothes that are given us cannot be regarded as free from lice, but they are not anything like as lousy as the ones we have turned in. Visit Talbot House and accept the written invitation to “Come into the garden and forget about the war.” The garden, at the rear of the building, is a very pleasant spot and well supplied with literature. We get supper at the Y.M.C.A. and afterwards go to a picture show. Jump a lorry which takes us back to camp. A most enjoyable day after the recent trip up the line, for small pleasures count as big ones over here.

**May 17th—**In the early morning a German aeroplane flies over our camp. Lewis guns get after it but without any apparent effect. Later in the day one of our planes gets shot down and drops near the Transport lines, the observer being killed and the pilot badly wounded. One of our ambulances is quickly on the scene - so quickly that it must have started out as soon as the plane began to fall.

**May 18th—**Get a gas scare in the early morning but it proves a false alarm. Fine weather continues. Spend another pleasant afternoon at Pop. with Lowe, Botel and Davidson—jump lorries both coming and going.

**May 20th—**Leave camp at 7:30 a.m. on a working party supplied by the signaling section, with Brouse in charge. Unloading transports— monotonous work but we are in good spirits and good condition, and the time passes quickly enough. Am writing a letter in the Y.M.C.A. in the evening when I overhear one of the Pats talking to an Engineer. He is telling him of the enemy raid that the 49th repulsed on the first of the month. “We were in Maple Copse,” he says, “And it seemed as though all hell was loose on the 49th front. We wondered how the fellows were sticking it out-—and maybe we didn’t get a thrill when we heard the burst of rapid fire just as soon as the shelling stopped. We knew, without anyone telling us, that Fritz had come over and had found the 49th right Johnnie- on-the-spot.”

**May 22nd—**Move up to the line once more. Raining, but the troops are in happy mood—we got paid a few hours before we started, and the canteen was open, but there is no question of anybody not being able to navigate. “A” and “C” Companies together with Signaling details, spend the night at the Belgium Chateau. On duty at night and have a sweet time delivering messages in the inky darkness of the strange surroundings.

**May 23rd—**We proceed up to the trenches and take over the sector right of Hooge, relieving the C.M.R.’s. Radcliffe, Lowe and I together again and stationed with “B” Company. The three **C.M.R.** signalers we relieve hand over the station to us in great shape—they even have some hot tea ready for us on arrival. An officer, a former 51st man who is out here from England for a month’s trench experience, pays our dug-out a long visit in the evening, and we enjoy his lively conversation.

**May 24th—**Feel a craving for a drink of hot tea—our primus heater has “gone west” sometime ago—and decide to take a chance and boil a mess tin on an open fire. Cut up some dry wood and shavings and take them some distance down the communication trench, and soon have a clear and smokeless fire going. The dixie is just about boiling when along comes a Brigade Officer—an R.C.R. Captain—and his runner. He asks me what I am doing with a fire, when I know it is against orders —to which I reply that I am making no smoke. He tells me to put it out, and I answer that to put it out now will cause plenty of smoke—I suggest that it should be allowed to burn itself out. He repeats the order and I thereupon throw dirt on the fire. A cloud of smoke ascends, on seeing which he takes out his notebook and asks for my name and number, adding that he is going to report me. But before I can reply, a salvo of whiz-bangs scream over and burst unpleasantly close to us — he and his runner beat it in one direction and I in the other, and I do not see them again! We are eventually able to borrow a primus from “B” Company fellows, so do not have to go without hot tea.

A quiet day in the line. No shelling to speak of—a few trench mortars (sausages) land in our lines but we have no casualties. The wire to H.Qrs. is none too good but we get better service later in the day when a new line is laid down. Go down for rations at night.

**May 26th—**The line continues quiet. There is a Stokes Gun near our dug-out and we josh the crew about their inactivity, though to speak truth we would as lief see it quiet, for any activity on its part will bring swift retaliation around our flimsy dug-outs. They tell us they have got Fritz’s trench flattened out and are waiting for him to build them up again before they send over any more shells! Lowe livens us up in the evening with his mouth organ—we never seem to get tired of the old favourites.

**May 27th—**We trade around with the fellows at D5C station, and get the better of the deal as far as dug-outs are concerned.

**May 29th—**Our casualties this trip have been very light so far— touch wood. There has been a certain amount of desultory shelling going on all over the front but little damage has been done. The front line continues to get its daily ration of sausages—from Fritz. Feel somewhat fed-up with sticking around the signaling dug-out for so long and I get permission from the Scout Officer to go out on patrol with the scouts.

Out at night with my brother, Mott and Adkins. We worm our way out of a sap into No Man’s Land and, by short squirming and long pauses, we get close enough to the German line to hear them coughing and moving around. Scouts seem to know every inch of the ground. We make our way slowly down No Man’s Land, stopping sometimes for half an hour or more, or so it seems. This may be almost routine work for the scouts, but it is quite exciting to one out on night patrol for the first time. The flare-lights too, both ours and theirs, add to the thrills. There is always the chance of a German patrol being encountered, though we are aware that Fritz is not very keen about patrolling between the lines— but the odd rat keeps us very much on the qui vive. We return to our line at a pre-arranged spot and time-—an essential precaution to avoid being shot at by our own sentries. It is three and a half hours since we left our trenches—a chilly night and the rum ration goes down well on our return.

**May 30th —** Intermittent shelling continues. H. Qrs. area seems to be getting a good many of the shells. Vaughan, linesman, comes down to our dug-out to get some sleep—states he was unable to get any last night at H. Qrs.

**May 31st—**The last day in the line. Casualties during this eight-day trip have been light. Get a late relief, for the Pats do not take over until midnight.

**June 2nd—**From our camp, “F” camp near Poperinghe, we hear a heavy bombardment going on up the line. Later on a report comes through that the Germans have attacked and that the C.M.R.’s have lost some ground. Shortly before noon we get a “Stand-to,” and at 1:30 p.m. the Battalion falls in and marches up the line, with the Band in the lead. Band leaves us at the Vlamertinghe road. All kinds of rumours are coming through and we realize we are in for something, for there is no doubt that Fritz has started a big offensive. On reaching the Belgium Chateau we halt and lie low for a while in the grass. A good deal of shelling going on and the Battalion suffers some casualties. Some distance on our left one of our batteries is drawing heavy shell fire. There only seems to be one gun left in action, but that continues to bark away defiantly.

We get orders to proceed to the Ramparts, and we move off in small bodies.

A great deal of activity going on in Ypres — although under normal conditions there is not much stirring there during the daytime—and the town is being subjected to a lot of shelling. Ammunition being rushed up to our batteries and we cheer the drivers as they gallop past us — the scene brings to mind a line from one of Kipling’s barrack-room ballads, “The guns, thank Gawd, the guns.” About a hundred yards ahead of us a shell bursts on the road in front of a six-horse team. The two horses in the lead are apparently wounded, and one of them falls down. Their trace chains are quickly unhooked by their driver, who appears to be unhurt, and the limber proceeds with four horses. The incident serves to show the practicability of the army harness and hitching under active service conditions, for the limber on this occasion was only delayed a matter of seconds. (Canadian teamsters were inclined to scoff at the British army harness when they first saw it, but they had not been in France long before they had nothing but praise for it.)

The Battalion reaches the Ramparts and remains there, awaiting orders. Night falls, and we sit in the candlelight under the great solid ramparts, which remain almost unscathed through centuries of battles. We are all quiet and subdued and wondering what the future holds in store for us. An order comes for the 49th to move up the line. The signaling section does not get detailed with the Companies for all signaling stations have been wiped out, and communication has to be kept up by runners. Some of us (signalers) are detailed as runners and others are detailed to carry ammunition up the line. Pete Livingstone and I, carrying a box of ammunition between us, bring up the rear of the carrying party.

**June 3rd—** After we pass Zillibecke with the ammunition we witness some ghastly scenes in the communication trench leading up to Maple Copse and Lovers’ Walk. The great sandbag wall has been smashed up by German shells and the trench is one string of dead and wounded—you can tell which are the dead for they are quiet when we unavoidably tread on them in the darkness, but the wounded moan. Our stretcher bearers are already at work, but the situation is far beyond them. There are cries everywhere for water and our water bottles are soon emptied. The front line is one mass of fireworks, and there is considerable shelling and bombing going on. Walking wounded, as they pass us on their way out, have one word for the situation —-it is “tough”. A panic-stricken man, possibly wounded, runs by us shouting out that everything is lost. Come upon a party of the 42nd digging a support trench below Maple Copse — and never were the honoured greetings, “Good old Forty-Twas,” and “Good old Forty-Ninth,” exchanged more fervently. Just as we have passed Maple Copse a terrific bombardment opens up and Livingstone and I lie low in the trench. We are joined later by Starling. All other bombardments we have been through seem almost insignificant compared to what is going on now. Nearby explosions follow one another so closely that at times there is nothing but one great ear- splitting roar around us. The earth is shaking, and dirt is being rained down on us. It seems impossible for anyone to live through anything like this and, during a slight lull, Pete remarks, in a resigned and cool voice, “It’s all up now.” I tell him we’ll march down Jasper yet (though I am afraid it did not sound very convincing.) Starling, who is between Pete and me, gets wounded, and a chunk of shrapnel, spent and also cushioned by a few inches of loose earth, hits me in the back — it smarts enough to make me wriggle out of some of the dirt. The shelling quietens down and at length stops in our immediate vicinity. I have less dirt on me than the other two and after some difficulty I am able to free myself. Pete and Starling are held down fast by their legs, but I am able to give Pete a hand to release himself, and we then scrape the earth away from Starling without entrenching tools, after which we dig out the box of ammunition. Starling has a bad shrapnel wound in his left leg', just below the body — too severe a wound for our small field dressings to be of much use, and it is too high up in the leg to attempt to fix up a tourniquet to stop the bleeding. He asks us to carry him out, but Pete tells him we have got to continue on with the ammunition. It is difficult however to leave Starling alone and uncared for — if we leave him it is a case of leaving him to die. A walking wounded, on his way out, comes along at this stage and he tells us there is no scarcity of ammunition in the line, though the fellows are running short of bombs. I thereupon persuade Pete to leave the ammunition and we proceed down the trench with Starling’s arms over our shoulders. After struggling along a short distance in this manner, we find a stretcher lying near the trench—a welcome find for Starling is suffering badly. But the going is still difficult with him on the stretcher, for the communication trench has been so badly smashed up. The trench is still being subjected to some shelling- and the big gaps below Maple Copse, where the sand-bag wall has been knocked down, are being periodically raked by enemy machine-gun fire. It is daylight now and we can see the desolation that has been wrought by German shells during the past twenty-four hours. After a hard trip, harder because there are no shoulder straps on the stretcher, we eventually get Starling down to the dressing station. He gives us a profound look of gratitude as we leave him (we were sorry when word came through sometime afterwards that he had died in hospital). Pete and I then report at the Ramparts and are detailed to act as runners. Pete is later detailed to take a party of Engineers up to the front line.

**June 4th—**Pete apparently had quite a time keeping his party together up the line last night — he says that if he takes another party of Engineers up he will have them roped together!

Go up the line in the morning. There are still a good many of our wounded in the trench alongside Maple Copse — some are crying out for water but there is none available—the water-bottles of the dead have long since been collected and emptied. See a bad case of shell shock—a man is lying on the trench-mat speechless and his eyes are rolling around in a most unnatural manner. The dead are lying around thick and there are gruesome scenes everywhere. The Germans apparently got down as far as Maple Copse when they attacked two days ago, for just beyond the corner nearest their front there is one of their dead in the trench. There is a Pat, a fair-haired young fellow, on top of him with a death grip round his throat. The Pat has what appears to be a bayonet wound in the back, received no doubt at the moment he throttled the life out of the German.

Three kilties, members of the 13th Battalion, come along the trench. They have been separated from their Battalion and are seeking some unit to which they can attach themselves. Beyond Maple Copse however the communication trench almost ceases to exist, and it is impossible to proceed further until night falls. The whole area has been so pulverized by German shells as to be almost unrecognizable. The greenness of Maple Copse no longer exists and nothing, but blasted trunks are left of the shady trees of a few days ago. Small wonder that the C.M.R.’s, or the few who survived, the shelling, had to give ground when the German waves came over — and with the first wave armed with liquid flame throwers.

With the Battalion in the line at night. They seem to be holding ground in front of Lovers’ Walk and towards the edge of Sanctuary Wood, but the whole ground has been so chewed up with shell fire that it is difficult to get one’s bearings. It seems that the 49th attacked alone yesterday morning — the 52nd and the 60th were supposed to go over at the same time, but these two Battalions got badly cut up and lost a lot of officers between Half-Way House and the front line, and as a result the 49th went over the top alone. Though the attack was made with little or no artillery support, and in the face of almost hopeless odds, some valuable ground was recaptured and some trenches, or portions of trenches, retaken, and our position in the Salient greatly improved, though at terrible cost.

I find my brother in charge of a badly wounded German prisoner. He tells me of a little incident which illustrates how quickly a man’s emotions may change. One of our fellows came along the trench and my brother asked him if he could spare any water for the wounded German. “Where is the dirty b ?” was the reply. “If he’s thirsty I’ll let him suck a few inches of my bayonet.” But when he saw the look in the eyes of the suffering but silent young German, his hate left him and he finished up by giving the wounded enemy some of his precious water. My brother adds that the quick change from fierceness to tenderness would have been comical at some other time and place. Brigade has sent up word that this wounded German is to be carried out without delay, so that he can be questioned, but our stretcher bearers flatly refuse to take him out, and quite rightly, while so many of our own wounded are needing immediate attention (the wounded German died before the stretcher bearers could get round to him.)

What a pitiful remnant of the Battalion is left. They have been without sleep and under shell fire for more than forty-eight hours, with little water and next to no rations — in addition they have had the wounded to attend to, yet as they peer over the shattered sand-bags they are ready to give a good account of themselves if need be. There are indications that the enemy may attempt to follow up the advantage he has gained, but if he attacks tonight he will find determined men awaiting him.

It is good to see young Pilkie amongst the survivors — as usual he is counting for a great deal in his own quiet manner. Major Hobbins is in charge of the Battalion — he took over when Major Weaver was wounded (Colonel Griesbach is an acting Brigadier in the line, in charge of the 49th, the 52nd, and the 60th.) A Major of the Pats is with Major Hobbins—the former has been buried and is badly shaken up. With them is Brouse, and his cheerful nature has kept on top throughout the two days’ holocaust. Major Hobbins gives me a verbal message to take out — to the effect that the relief is expected at any time and that as soon as it arrives, he will bring the Battalion out. He is as cool and collected as he would be in the Orderly Room — yet I wonder if any C.O. in France has had a greater ordeal than the acting C.O. of the 49th during the past forty-eight hours. The responsibility has been his, in addition to the physical suffering and the nerve shattering shell fire he has had to share with the rest.

On leaving the line and reaching the Ramparts, find that the Battalion has been ordered to “C” camp. Busses await us at the Asylum and convey us to the camp. Everyone strangely quiet as we reach the camp just before the dawn (June 5th); but a reaction is setting in and men’s eyes are moist with emotion as they think of those they will never see again. One man is unable to control his feelings and he breaks down and sobs. O that those who were in any way instrumental in bringing this war about — politicians, diplomats, munition manufacturers, the great war lords and others — could have spent the last forty-eight hours in the Ypres Salient.

**June 5th—**Sleep most of the day. Get the good news later that the British Navy has not been defeated at Jutland, as at first reported — the first bad news filtered through somehow to the front line on the 3rd when the 49th was struggling so desperately against such odds.

In the evening the fellows get together in small groups, discussing the recent fighting and finding out who has been killed and who wounded. Our casualties, killed, wounded and missing, are estimated to number close to four hundred though the Battalion went into the line greatly under strength — probably not much more than five hundred strong. The missing can be regarded as dead, for the nature of the fighting was such that it is not likely that any of our fellows were captured. Only four Offi- cers came out with the Battalion. What a lot of the finest men in the 49th have “gone west”, and how difficult it is going to be to fill the gaps. There is space here for mention of only one or two names of those who will be with us no more — in the flesh at least.

Billy Hill is one of those who has gone out on the big adventure — Billy Hill who could raise a laugh whenever he wanted to, and how often would his humour flash out when his platoon mates were cold and wet and hungry — just when it meant a lot. It was my good fortune to spend some months in the same tent as Billy Hill and Blondie Hammond, and never was there a dull moment in the tent when those two were around — Blondie (who was killed at Amiens in 1918) was an admirable foil for Hill. I will never forget Billy Hill’s description of his first visit to an English barber’s shop—it was at Shorncliffe. He started off by saying that he thought at first he had wandered into a blacksmith’s shop, for the barber- was wearing a black apron — but the description perhaps would not sound funny in print —it needs to be related by Billy Hill. I do not think I am making any mistake when I say that with the passing of Billy Hill the 49th has lost its greatest wit—and there was never any bitterness about his humour.

Sergt. Bill Bates is another who leaves a big gap. There was no kindlier soul in the Battalion than this ex-Marine — the Marines have the reputation of turning out some tough characters on occasion, but Bill Bates was one of nature’s own gentlemen if ever there was one. On the morning of the 3rd the inferno was at its worst on Bill Bates’ front but he led his platoon over the top and into the thick of it with the remark, “Well mates, it looks like bloody suicide, but it’s orders.”

Carscadden is another who has “gone west”— Carscadden whose commission came through the day before he went up the line. He was killed the next day, the 3rd June, wearing a borrowed uniform (borrowed I believe from Capt. Hudson). What a future this cool headed and fearless young Officer had in the 49th, had fate decreed that he should live. I cannot think of Carscadden without recalling an incident two or three weeks after the 49th landed in France. We were on a carrying party packing trench paraphernalia up the V.C. Road in front of Kemmel. It was past midnight and for hours we had worked in the rain and the mud carrying barbed wire, sandbags, trench mats, etc., up to the front line. The Engineers were imposing on us, taking advantage of the keenness and enthusiasm of newly arrived troops, and were getting as much as they could out of us. We were waiting for yet another load to come up on the miniature railway and, as there was no sign of it, we sat down in the mud and rested our weary bodies. Some of us were so dead beat that we were soon asleep. Nobody stirred when the truck at length arrived. Carscadden, the Sergeant in charge of the party, told us, in his usual decent manner, to unload the truck, but still nobody moved. Now, in the ordinary course of events, a mere suggestion from Carscadden would have had all the weight of an order, and we would have jumped to it; but our stomachs were so empty our bodies so exhausted that we stayed where we were. Then he pleaded with us — he knew we were dead tired — that we were being taxed beyond human endurance—but the load had to go up — it was the last load and when it had been taken up the line we could return to camp. Still there was no response from us. Once more he said, “Come along, boys,” but we did not move. And then how the man suddenly became transformed, though I doubt not but that he was only playing the part of an actor, but he dropped the gentleman and became a tough foreman among a bunch of railroad bohunks; he jumped in among us and gave us such a tongue lashing—“You good-for-nothing b --- . You lazy sons of b \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, get up and get busy.” Needless to remark we got busy, and as quickly as our tired bodies would allow us. Carscadden knew men and how to handle them, and we thought all the more of him after that working party.

What tales of heroism are told in those quiet groups in “C” camp this evening. How Capt. Mac-Naughton went over the top at the head of his Company- whistling cheerfully, as was his wont—his whistling was ever more cheerful than tuneful— how he fell mortally wounded in enemy territory and how, as he lay dying, he was seen to tear up a large sum of money he had with him, so that it would not fall into the hands of the Germans, who would have been able to cash in on it through some neutral country. Then the tale is told how Barbour (one of the survivors) found himself alone in an enemy trench and cut off from his Company. An order to surrender made him “kinda sore,” and he fought his way back to the Company with the bayonet—he is said to have tossed one German out of the trench as though he were a big rag doll, and it can be believed when one considers the size and strength of the man. Pages could be filled in recounting acts of individual heroism, but my- space is limited.

One thing is sure—no man who spent the 3rd and 4th of June in the Salient can be quite the same again. He has been through experiences, and felt emotions, which can never be erased from his memory. A keen psychologist would perhaps be able to detect something different about the eyes—something that was not there before.

**June 6th —** Shortly before noon there is a rumour that the Germans are attacking again, and we get an S.O.S. “Stand-to.” It is hard to believe that the remnant of the Battalion is to be marched back to the shambles again, for if another counter attack is to be made it should surely be a job for a fresh Battalion, and one up to strength; Corps H.Qrs., or whoever is responsible for the order, is expecting too much, but we fall in and resign ourselves to what fate has in store for us. We are eventually dismissed however, but the “Stand-to” is not cancelled for a couple of hours.

A muster parade is held in the afternoon — surely the saddest parade that will ever be held by the 49th. Billy controls his emotion and says a few words — simple, direct, plain words, as is his wont — and no superlatives. It seems that the Battalion acquitted itself well during those two days in the Salient.

Read in the “Daily Mail” that the shelling in the Salient on the 2nd and 3rd of June was the most concentrated, and the heaviest, of any that has taken place during the entire war.

**June 7th —** An incident of this morning shows how highly strung the fellows are after the recent fighting. A number of us are writing letters in the Y.M.C.A. hut at the back of the camp when a baseball hits the outside wall with a loud bang. Everywhere men involuntarily jump to their feet, though under ordinary circumstances the sudden noise would have passed almost unnoticed.

In the afternoon we are instructed to fall in with full packs. No word as to our destination, and for aught we know it may be to return up the line. But on leaving “C” camp we turn our backs on the trenches and march through Poperinghe and away out into the country. A beautiful day — blue skies and fleecy white clouds, with the warm sunshine tempered by a cooling breeze — and the march through the peaceful and unspoilt country does us all a world of good after the nerve shattering experiences up the line; some of the serenity of the countryside seems to enter into our own beings, and of all the marches during the war this, I think, is one that will never fade from my memory. A long march and we are footsore and weary when we eventually halt at a little village near Steenvertes, but there would have been no grousing if we had had to march further through the country that calm summer’s evening. Billeted in a barn on the out- skirts of the village. Pete Livingstone and I go out and get a feed of eggs and chips—and never did eggs and chips go down better. Turn into the straw and sleep soundly.

**June 8th, 1916 —** Section runs wire between Companies and Headquarters. Botel, Swarbeck and I on duty at “A” Company. Cattle break down wire and the old farmer where we are billeted, a very decent old fellow, insists on giving us a hand to fix it. In the evening the band gives a concert in the village. A beautiful calm evening and we appreciate the music after the recent two days’ tragic fighting in the lines.

**June 10th—**We get a draft of 416 men from the 66th Battalion. A fine-looking lot as they march on to the parade ground. It does us good to realize that the great gaps in the Forty-Ninth are to be filled with men from Edmonton. A lot of them are known to the fellows and, as soon as they are dismissed, there is a great deal of handshaking and greeting. The new men are very eager to get up the line and into action. We tell them we felt the same way ourselves once, but now we are quite content to wait until we are detailed to go up.

**June 11th—**Sunday, and a church parade is held. Colonel Griesbach says a few words, which we all appreciate, before the service starts. He mentions that the casualties of the 49th on June 2nd, 3rd, and 4th amounted to 391 killed and wounded.

**June 13th—**Swarbeck and Jones leave on a Signalling course. Hear that Dempsey, Lowe and Roberts, of our Section, have all made Blighty from wounds received on the 3rd June. The list of honours covering the recent fighting comes through. Brouse and Mason, of the Signalling Section, are mentioned in dispatches.

**June 14th-—**In the early hours of the morning we hear a heavy strafing up the line, and. the rumour comes through later that the 1st Division has attacked and regained all the lost ground in the Salient. While I am on duty at night, on the phones, Sir Max Aiken comes around and asks where he can find the Colonel.

**June 15th—**Yesterday’s rumour confirmed. The 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th Battalions attacked yesterday and retook all the trenches lost on the 2nd of the month, together with 158 prisoners. Everyone greatly exhilarated at the news.

**June 17th—**Parade and inspection in the morning by the Brigadier. Hear that we return to the Salient in four days’ time. In the evening two of the girls, where we are billetted, show a great deal of interest in the field telephone. Spense lets them talk to Munier, who is on duty at Headquarters. Tremendous excitement on their part when they hear Meunier, who speaks to them in French, for they have never seen a telephone before, probably never heard of one. They both dance around and try to talk into the receiver at the same time, and Spense and I only stop laughing when the phone gets yanked off the table on to the floor. Dave Little comes back from hospital and rejoins the Section, and glad we all are to have him with us again.

**June 19th — A** number of new Officers, including Lieut. Murray, join the Battalion. A bath parade in afternoon. Walk to Steenvorde and take busses from there to Poperinghe. Baths in Pop well fitted up and we feel comparatively clean on emerging, for in addition to clean underclothing, our tunics and pants are fumigated.

**June 20th —** We are to return to the Salient to- morrow. Corporal Batt, who is in charge of the Signalling Section, asks me whom I would like with me on my station in the line — he states it is his policy as far as possible to have men together who know each other and get on well. Without hesitation I ask for, and am able to get, Bill Frame and Charlie Wampler. Feel I must have been given first choice, for Frame and Wampler, with their unfailing good nature and sense of humour, would be in demand on any station.

**June 21st —** Reveille at 5:30 a.m. Travel by two-decker bus to our old Transport camp. Only a limited number allowed on top of bus, for these vehicles were built for level London streets and are top-heavy on uneven country roads. Driver tells us he took a load of Kilties to Poperinghe last week and, in spite of his warning, they all crowded on the top. Going round a bend the bus upset, the Kilties all being bruised but fortunately having no bones broken. The driver adds, with a chuckle, that after the bus was righted, one and all were quite content to finish the journey on the inside.

At 6:30 p.m. the band plays us up the line. What a different Battalion it is to that which the band played up to the trenches on that fateful June 2nd, less than three weeks ago; but well we know that the name established by the originals is safe enough in the hands of the new men. No shells are falling in Ypres as we pass through it — in fact the entire Salient seems very quiet. “B” and “C” Companies go into support in Zillebecke dugouts, Wampler, Frame and I being stationed with the latter Company. Share a dugout with Sergeant- Major Parsons and his batman.

**June 22nd—**An exceptionally comfortable and roomy dugout. Contains bunks, chairs, table and a small cook-stove. We augment our rations at the Y.M.C.A. about fifty yards away and live well. Very little shelling taking place. Watch an aeroplane fight in the afternoon—our plane brought down. Time passes quickly enough in the dugout, and we enjoy Sergeant-Major Parsons’ company. Trench experiences figure largely in our conversation. Parsons, discussing the loss of four “C” Company men at Hooge last April, says that Fritz was in luck that day all right — if he had come over either on the left or right of where he did, he would have found men ready for him and his raiding party might well have been wiped out.

**June 23rd—**General Mercer’s body is found by our fellows and is carried out of the line. General Williams, the other General who was in the line on a tour of inspection on June 2nd, is reported to have been wounded and captured.

**June 25th—**Wampler, Frame and I are detailed to the front line with “D” Company. We were supposed to relieve the 42nd this evening but the relief is cancelled to twenty-four hours. It seems their bombing section is pulling off some sort of a stunt in No Man’s Land to-night. Wish them good luck.

**June 26th—**Go up to the front line at night with “D” Company. Trenches broken down and whole area in an awful mess. A great many of the dead, both German and our own, have been unburied for two or three weeks. These mid-summer days and nights have been warm and one cannot get away from the stench of decayed human flesh. After we have taken over from the 42nd there is a great deal of confusion round “D” Company Headquarters, the trench being jammed by a ration party, a water carrying party and eight draft C.M.R. Officers — the latter just out from England and sent up the line to get some trench experience. Dawn is almost breaking and if Fritz sees this crowded trench there will be some carnage all right. Captain Macleod (George) arrives overland at an opportune moment, from an inspection of the “D” Company front. He looks down on the scene of chaos, says “Hello! What’s up here,” and in about two minutes has everything straightened out. He disposes of the eight C.M.R. Officers by sending two to each platoon. Signalling station in “D” Company Headquarters dugout. Bill Frame goes on duty there and Charlie Wampler and I find another dugout to sleep in.

**June 27th—**Our trenches are subjected to a violent bombardment shortly before dawn. Particularly severe in our immediate front and at times our dugout is rocking. Candle gets blown out three times by concussion from nearby explosions. Charlie lets out a blue streak of cuss words because his knees won’t keep still, but he soon has them under control — he says they are usually that way at the beginning of a bombardment. Needless to remark am every bit as scared myself. The shelling lets up as dawn is breaking. Away on our right heavy rifle fire breaks out and it would appear that Fritz is trying to come over. There is no sign of him coming over on our own front but the fellows nevertheless man the firing-step and blaze away across No Man’s Land. See a “D” Company man standing on the firing-step with his pants down—he is pumping lead across to the German lines while a first-aid man bandages a cut above his knee, received. from a chunk of shrapnel—the first-aid man was in the middle of the bandaging when the rifle fire opened up and his patient, believing that Fritz was coming- over, insisted on climbing up on the firing-step.

Our casualties during the shelling have been severe. On my way to the Signalling dugout, to take over from Frame, I hear some heavy groaning. Proceed down a side trench, the first part more than knee-deep in water, and find two badly wounded Pats, both Brigade trench mortar men. One of them, a big husky fellow, is unconscious and, by the way, his body is heaving, would appear to be in the death throes. Fix up a rest for the other man’s head, a slim fair-haired young fellow, and make him a little more comfortable. When I make a motion to leave, he beseeches me not to go away, but he calms down when I tell him I will be back with a first aid man in a few minutes. Report to Captain Macleod and he details a first-aid man to go along with me; but we find both the Pats have died since I left them. Much regret now that I did not stay with the conscious man until the end. On one of them there are no means of identification whatsoever, but we find an identification disc and some papers on the other man.

Communications wrecked during the shelling but we are able to repair the wires without much delay. In the afternoon Charlie and I run a line to the 13th Battalion, who are on our right. They tell that Fritz tried to come over on them this morning— that’s where we heard the heavy rifle fire—but they were able to beat him back without difficulty.

Frame and I go down for rations at night. Go overland across the broken ground and smashed-up trenches and we lose our way. Get challenged and it turns out that our challengers are the Pats. They tell us we can consider ourselves lucky we did not get shot—they want to know what we are doing in No Man’s Land and on their front. Completely mystified as to how we could have got there but consider ourselves lucky we finished up where we did.

**June 28th—**Our line to Headquarters gets broken again, in the early morning by a shell. Frame and Wampler go out and mend the break. A miserable wet day. Nothing hot to eat or drink, and little or no sleep for the past two days, but Wampler and Frame do not seem to be much affected. Frame tells Charlie he wishes he would not spit on his boot, and Charlie wants to know where else he can spit, having regard to the size of the dugout and the fact that Bill’s feet are in it. The Colonel pays our dugout a visit later in the day. Charlie sits alongside him, munching small hard-tack biscuits from a pile contained in his steel helmet, held between his knees. The Colonel accuses him of not being very hospitable, whereupon Charlie offers him the hard tack with a grin, and the two of them munch away together. After which Charlie passes him an issue cigarette. Needless to remark we thoroughly appreciate the Colonel’s little visit.

There are perhaps some C.O.’s who could not afford to mix with, and be on such familiar terms with their men; but we know, and Billy knows, that our respect for him is all the greater on these occasions when he sheds his rank and mixes with the troops. Am reminded here of a tale told the other day of the Colonel and his runner dropping into a canteen of the Guards behind the lines. Billy ordered beer for two and the Guards then witnessed the strange and unexpected sight (to them) of a Colonel and a Private enjoying their beer together.

For many nights burial parties have been hard at work but many of the dead are still lying around. Holes are dug alongside where the men lie, but so many have been killed in the Salient that as often as not, when digging graves, the diggers uncover other bodies. Many of the bodies, both German and our own, that can be seen around the broken trenches have been lying there since the beginning of the month, and they are now green and rotten. In the dusk I step on a bloated German lying in a pool of water. Feel his skin break and only his uniform prevents my foot going right into his decayed body. At night we get relieved by McGillivray and Newell. Go down to a dugout in Maple Copse, where “C” Company is in supports, and welcome a hot meal and some sleep.

**June 29th—**A quiet day in Maple Copse - how inappropriate the name is now for there is nothing to be seen but mud and blasted tree stumps. Signalling station in “C” Company Officers’ dugout. Pump has to be kept busy to keep water out. Frame, Wampler and I turn our rations over to the cook who is looking after the Officers and he cooks our meals as well — best meals we have had for some time.

The Colonel comes round at night and tells the fellows there are a number of Lee Enfield rifles scattered around the far side of Maple Copse, where he and his runner have been prowling around. None of the new draft men have got Lee Enfields yet and there is a rush to get these rifles — rifles which have been lying around in the mud for days, perhaps weeks or months, but after they have been cleaned and oiled, which may take a couple of days or more, the owner will feel well rewarded for his trouble. He will have a rifle which he can rely on and not one, such as his issue the Ross, which will let him down at the moment he needs it most. There is a rumour that the entire Canadian Corps is to be issued with the Lee Enfield shortly. If this ever comes to pass we will feel that our Colonel has been in no small degree responsible for the ditching of the Ross, for he has never lost an opportunity of condemning it as utterly unsuitable for warfare.

**June 30th—**Maple Copse continues quiet for we get nothing during the day save a few whiz-bangs. Get relieved in good time by the 43rd. No shelling as we leave the line. Motor lorries take us from Ypres to “C” Camp which we reach about 3 :00 a.m. In tents, which we prefer to huts at this time of the year.

**July 1st—**Go over to the Pats Orderly Room and turn in the identification disc and letter which I took from the dead Pat on the last trip in the line. The O.R. Sergeant tells me they should have been left for the burial party to remove — explain to him that the dead man was in a spot where he might not have been found. In afternoon go to Poperinghe with Brouse and Wampler. On phone duty at night. Hear that our casualties during the last trip in the line amounted to forty- eight killed and wounded, the heavy bormbardment on the morning of the 27th June accounting for a good many of the casualties. Some bombs are dropped close to our camp at night but no casualties result. Before I go off duty the good news comes through from Brigade of a British advance on the Somme.

**July 6th—**Flag-wagging and buzzer work in the morning. Brigade sports in the afternoon. The 49th does not distinguish itself particularly — possibly our fellows have not trained as much as the other three battalions. We win the tug-of-war however and do so easily. Watch a baseball match in the evening between the Pats and the R.C.R.’s - a good game.

**July 9th—**Sunday, and a Church Parade is announced, whereupon the entire Signalling Section mysteriously vanish. In the afternoon the 49th play a football match with the Lahore Battery. Our team sadly hit by the scrap in the line last month and is only a shade of its former self. Lahore Battery wins, the score being 1-0, but we do not mind being beaten by such a fine outfit. Whenever we are in the line, we like to have the Lahore Battery behind us, for we know how well they can be depended upon. Long may they remain with the 3rd Division. In the line we exchange our Maconichy rations for their pork and beans - curious that the British Tommy does not like pork and beans.

**July 10th—**We move up the line and spend the night at Zillibecke Bund. No shelling and no casualties on our way in. We are to go into the trenches on the Mount Sorrel front to-morrow night.

**July 11th—**On duty during the day on Headquarters phone. “Ralph Connor”, who holds the rank of a Major, comes in and gives me a message to send to another Chaplain at Brigade. Some of the Signallers at the back of the dug-out, unaware of Ralph Connor’s presence, are indulging very freely in the soldiers’ vernacular. He thereupon rebukes them gently, telling them “they might be blasted into eternity at any moment, and with those foul words on their lips.” Corporal Batt apologizes for himself and the others but he adds, with a grin, that the men would not understand him, would not know what he was talking about in fact, unless he swore at them. Ralph Connor remains in the dugout and chats with us for a while. His visit, and the rebuke he has given us, in no way lessens our respect for him— it has always been of the highest for have we not seen him so often in the front line, collecting letters for mailing and tactfully suggesting to fellows, who have no letters to give him, how much a few lines will be appreciated at home.

Go into the line at night with “B” Company. Stationed again with Bill Frame and Charlie Wampler. We share a deep and bomb-proof dugout with some sappers—the first bomb-proof dugout we have struck in the Salient. The outside of the dugout faces Valley Cottages, where our Headquarters are, and we establish a visual station for use if the wires are broken down for any length of time. We also have two carrier pigeons with us for use if necessary. They are nice plump pigeons and Charlie says he has no intention of going hungry, for one meal at least, if our rations ever fail us!

**July 12th—**Mount Sorrel a sorry looking mess now we can see it by daylight. A great many dead, more German than our own, are still to be seen everywhere. It is evident that Fritz must have lost heavily when the 3rd Brigade recaptured the lost trenches last month. See one of our fellows eating biscuits and bully and sitting practically on top of a dead German, whose legs protrude from under a small mound of dirt. The eater of biscuits and bully is not needlessly callous—he is sitting on the mound because it happens to be the most convenient place he could find. Charlie and I send off the pigeons in the evening, with a message giving time of release, written on the tissue paper forms and wrapped up in the small aluminum tubes attached to their legs. Charlie does some fancy swearing when they head straight for the German trenches. They are greeted by a machine-gun, but they naturally present a small target and are unharmed. After circling around for a while, they fly straight in the direction of their cotes. At night Frame and I go down for rations, taking with us the empty basket for two more pigeons, for the pigeons are released daily to keep them exercised.

**July 14th—**Corporal Rawlinson tells me of my brother’s death. He was killed two days ago, but the news was kept from me until his body was recovered. It seems that on the early morning of the 12th he went out into No Man’s Land alone with the object of finding out if the Germans had done any fresh work on a certain sap. He got up to the enemy wire but apparently stayed out too long, too near the break of dawn, and was seen and shot. The body could not be recovered the following night, for the moon was too bright, but the second night Rawlinson and another scout were able to bring it in. They find he had been killed instantly, by a bullet in the forehead. Feel very grateful to them for taking a risk they should not really have taken. Our casualties have been light this trip in the line and I get permission from Captain Macleod to take the body out of the trenches for burial in the cemetery by Railway Dug-outs. Two of the scouts and I carry the body out on a stretcher as soon as it gets dark. Spend the night at Valley Cottages.

**July 15th—**My brother is buried in a soldier’s blanket, the Chaplain officiating at a short ceremony. Am told to remain at Valley Cottages and not return to the front line. Everybody goes out of their way to make things as easy as possible for me and I feel very grateful for the many little unobtrusive acts of kindness that are being shown me.

**July 16th—**Rawlinson is down at Valley Cottages at night and he tells us of the successful encounter with an enemy patrol in No Man’s Land on the night of the 14th. It seems that the previous night a strong German patrol had been seen by our scouts, who were not however in sufficient numbers to attack it. There was good reason to believe that the German patrol would be repeated so a mixed party of scouts and bombers, headed by Rawlinson, crept out into No Man’s Land on the night of the 14th and lay in wait for them. Two new draft officers, in the line for the first time and eager for some excitement, were also included in our party. After they had lain in wait for some considerable time the German patrol was seen approaching. Not a move was made until the enemy was close up to them when the bombers let fly their Millses and the others emptied their revolvers into the surprised patrol, six of whom were killed outright. Our patrol realized that the German machine-guns would open up at any moment and lost no time getting back to our trenches, but they were able to bring a wounded German along with them. He had to be carried along roughly and quickly but our patrol might have spared themselves the effort for the poor fellow on examination was found to have been very badly wounded and he died before he could be questioned. Our fellows feeling very elated over this encounter in No Man’s Land for we suffered no casualties.

**July 18th—**The Battalion moves out of the line and into the cellars of Ypres. Stationed once more with Frame and Wampler. We are with “A” Company, our Signalling station being in an old wine cellar of the Monastery.

**July 20th**—German aeroplane swoops down on the old Cavalry Barracks in Ypres in the early morning and rakes it with machine-gun fire, one of our fellows being hit in the leg. Ypres gets shelled mildly each day, but our casualties are light.

**July 21st—**Morton and I are detailed to go on a Signalling course at a school near Cassel, commencing on the 24th of the month. We leave Ypres and go down to the Transport Lines.

**July 23rd—**Walk with Morton to Reninghelst and take bus from there to Cassel. Before reporting to the Signalling School, some little distance from Cassel, we take a stroll around the town. See the Prince of Wales driving through. A hot afternoon and we take off our tunics—but get a good bawling out from an Imperial M.P. and have to put them on again. Go into camp and sleep in a big marquee containing a mixed crowd of Imperials, Canadians and Australians. A private of the Shropshires keeps us entertained long after “Lights Out”, with a most diverting account of various adventures up the line. Tells of one night he spent in a support trench in the Ypres Salient. It was a wet miserable night and in order to get a little protection from the rain he pegged his rubber sheet across the top of the trench. Having succeeded in erecting this rough shelter he sat down on the firing-step and dozed off. A working party comes along shortly afterwards, travelling overland. The Sergeant in the lead sees what he thinks, in the darkness, is a trench bridge; so he places a confident foot on the rubber sheet, and crashes down on the astonished man of the Shropshires. Now what the Sergeant said when he regained his feet could not be recorded in these pages.

**July 25th—**The Signalling School is a large one, attended by some hundreds of Imperials, Australians and Canadians. The course covers all branches of signalling and the instructors make it thoroughly interesting. Morton and I placed in a tent with two other Canadians and three Imperials, the latter consisting of two young Inniskillings and George, an old sweat. We four Canadians got a forty-five franc pay before coming to the School so we are able to supply the beer, and it’s cheap and good too at the canteen. George says this is the best course he was ever on. The two Inniskillings were down on the Somme during the early part of the month and it is interesting hearing them talk of their experiences. The British advance must have been affected at the cost of heavy casualties—heavier than the papers make out.

**July 26th—**Fine weather continues, and the course is proving a regular holiday, for we take things very easily. A big sports day is to be held on the 29th, next Saturday, and men can be seen every evening training assiduously for the various events. This evening the Sergeant-Major is training his tug-of war team, members of which are all Imperial N.C.O.’s and permanent instructors at the school. For a time, they practice with the rope tied to a tree, but the Sergeant-Major at length decides they should have some better practice than that so he approaches a crowd of onlookers and asks ten of them to get at the end of the rope and have a pull or two with his eight instructors. At this point a Canadian Corporal asks permission to select eight Canadians from the crowd — he would like to see if they can give the instructors any sort of a pull. The Sergeant-Major tells him to go ahead and the Corporal makes his selection. There are less than twenty Canadians for him to pick from but it just happens that three of the eight he selects are old tug-or-war men —one, Big Jock, had been anchor on a Winnipeg Police team — and the Corporal himself had coached teams before. The teams get on the rope and to the great delight of the crowd the eight Canadians, acting like a trained team under their coach, win three straight pulls from the instructors; no small achievement seeing that the instructors have been training for some time and are no light team. The Canadians thereupon decided to enter a tug-of-war team for the sports day next Saturday.

**July 27th—**My people, in a letter **I** get from home, tell me they cannot adequately express their appreciation of the letters received from members of the Battalion since my brother’s death. The letters have proved a comfort beyond words. The Colonel, in writing, told them that my brother was slated for a commission. Another letter they valued particularly was signed “Frank Winser” — they take it to be the letter of a fellow comrade and ranker and will be surprised when I tell them the writer is Major Winser.

**July 28th—**Fine weather continues. Go down to Hazebrouck in buses and get a good bath and change of clothing. See a couple of nurses in the town, the first I’ve seen since landing in France.

**July 29th—**Sports day is held in great weather. The Canadian tug-of- war team goes through to the finals without difficulty but gets beaten eventually. The final pull is the last event of the day but when the teams line up the Canadians are three men short, and three substitutes have to be found from the crowd. It turns out afterwards that the men who have let the team down remained too long at a local estaminet.

An excellent concert is held at night, on a stage fitted up with footlights. Some good yarns are told by a British Tommy, most of them yarns dealing with Army life. He tells of two men who found themselves in a shell-hole during an advance which had been held up by barbed wire. One man was unharmed but the other was crippled by a wound in the leg. Said the unharmed man, “You climb on my back and I’ll get you back to our lines.” To which the other replied, “Go to hell, will you. I get plugged in the back and you get a V.C.!” There are money prizes for the best performances, the audience doing the judging by their applause. The first prize is won by a private of the Durham Light Infantry for a magnificent rendering of “Annie Laurie”. He sings that immortal love song like one inspired, while the vast audience, under the star-lit sky, sits motionless and still.

**July 30th—**Sunday, and Church Parade in the morning. Rifle inspection follows. The inspection is done by an Imperial Second Lieutenant, a smart pink-cheeked youngster, who looks at my rifle and says, “This rifle is filthy. Take his name, Sergeant-Major. I will inspect it again at 2:30 this afternoon.” Ascertain after the parade that he has ordered nearly all the Canadian and Australians to parade again with their rifles. He is evidently under the impression that a touch of additional discipline will not do the Overseas troops any harm. Now our rifles are well oiled and in good condition for active service, but no doubt they are not in the same spick and span shape as those owned by the Imperials. Never have I seen a man take such a pride in his rifle as one of the young Inniskillings in our tent. He spends hours on it, poking with a match into every little corner where a speck of dust might lurk. I doubt if there is a cleaner rifle in the whole British army — so I borrow it for the second inspection in the afternoon. Yet that pink-cheeked boy, when he takes a look at it, has the nerve to say, “It’s a little better, but it is not as clean as it should be.” But he passes all the rifles, no doubt all borrowed, like mine, for the occasion.

**August 6th—**The two weeks’ course breaks up. The seven of us in our tent, and also in the same class, have had a good time together and we are quite sorry to have to separate. The two young Inniskillings, with their attractive Irish brogue, have been particularly good company. Morton and I take a bus for Reninghelst and afterwards join the Battalion. Good to be back with the fellows once more. Get word in the evening that forty of the 42nd have been killed and wounded by one shell which landed in the old Cavalry Barracks in Ypres.

**August 7th—**Clayton, Jeffries and I get detailed with Sergeant Ford to a Strong Point four or five miles behind the lines. Our job is to keep it in good repair and guard the ammunition that is stored there. It is on a small knoll and constitutes a position that would be manned and defended if our front line and supports gave way. We have a com- fortable dug-out and find we have indeed struck a snap. Four of the Pats, a Corporal and three privates, all original 1914 men, are also stationed at this Strong Point.

**August 8th—**We all work together in the morning, replacing sandbags which have rotted. Take things lazily in the afternoon. The Pats tell us of the first winter of the war it must have been a tough one all right, what with ill-prepared trenches and no rubber waders. The Pat Corporal says that the only time they were ever warm was when “they shivered themselves into a sweat.” About 10:00 in the evening we hear the buzzers going in the line and we know that Fritz is sending gas over. Some of it blows down as far as our Strong Point and we put on our gas helmets for a while — and very uncomfortable and stifling these flannel bags are.

**August 12th—**In the evening Sergeant Ford and I go over to the Q.M. Stores for rations. Afterwards walk over to “F” Camp where the Battalion has been for the past two days. Hear that the 43rd beat off an attempted enemy raid this morning. The 49th has been “standing- to” all day but the “stand-to” is cancelled in the evening. The Battalion is to go up the line in a couple of days.

**August 16th—**We work only in the mornings, for that is all that is necessary, and time continues to pass very easily. Take a walk in the afternoon to the Chateau and see Davidson, who is in charge of the small Y.M.C.A. there. The four Pats return to the Strong Point late at night showing indications of having been in a scrap. It seems they were in an estaminet when they got into a row with some Belgian soldiers and civilians. Being badly outnumbered they got the worst of the argument.

**August 17th—**The Pats arm themselves with clubs before setting out in the evening, the Corporal being in possession of a German trench club, the first of its kind I have seen—an ugly looking weapon studded with nail heads. However, on their return they tell us they had no need to use them, which would seem to support the theory that “If you want peace, prepare for war.”

**August 21st-—**Sergeant Carter takes over from Sergeant Ford at the Strong Point. We welcome Sergeant Carter, though sorry at the same time to lose Sergeant Ford — these old Imperials in the 49th, almost without exception, make very popular N.C.O.’s. Hear that the Battalion’s casualties during the last trip up the line were comparatively light — twenty-three wounded but nobody killed. Bob Newell of the Signalling Section among the wounded — with a blighty.

**August 23rd—**Imperial troops are moving into the sector and four of the Warwicks take over from the Pats at the Strong Point. It is evident that the Canadian Corps is moving from this part of the line. All sorts of rumours afloat regarding our destination.

**August 24th—**Sergeant Carter, Jeffries, Clayton and I. having received orders to rejoin the Battalion set out on foot for Steenvorde. Get a couple of lifts in lorries but have to walk most of the way. On arrival we go to our respective Companies and Sections. Signalling Section billeted in a barn about a mile from Steenvorde.

**August 26th—**Spend morning on visual signalling with station established on Mount Cassel, using heliographs and flags — binoculars required for the latter. Get paid in the afternoon. Go down to Steenvorde with Pete Livingstone and Bill English and get a supper of eggs and chips. Barn in a great uproar at night, a good many of the fellows being well lubricated — a natural sequence of events after being paid. Various renderings of “Sweet Adeline” are followed by a heated argument — whether the whale swallowed Jonah or Jonah the whale. Sleep quite out of the question for a long time.

**August 28th—**A rumour reaches us that Roumania has declared war on Austria, and we very much hope there is something to it. The Pats Concert Party entertain us in the evening in a marquee erected in a nearby field. A most excellent show. Two fellows by the name of Lilley and Maclaren put on some original and uproariously funny skits, while another chap named Fenwick proves a clever female impersonator. All the members of the concert party obviously enjoy themselves thoroughly and the audience becomes infected with their spirits.

**August 29th—**The rumour about Roumania having declared war is confirmed, and we are all hoping it will help to shorten hostilities. But we would have no kick if active service was all like this. This is without doubt the best “rest” that the Battalion has had in the war zone. We are far behind the lines, the country around here is Northern France at its best, and the cherry brandy at Mount Cassel is un- surpassed. Our Signalling Section is a happy lot — the Section has been fortunate in some recent additions and the discord that was sometimes in evidence a few months ago is never felt now. I doubt if a happier lot could be found in France than our crowd in the barn at night—a truly happy lot but perhaps it is not necessary to add that those of the Section, and others, who have “passed on” are not forgotten. This splendid comradeship is one of the great com- pensations of Army life on active service.

**Sept. 1st—**Botel and I go to Poperinghe. Few lorries on the road and we have to walk most of the way. Meet some Australians in a restaurant and have an interesting talk with them. They are the first Australians we have come across and their accent strikes us as curious. They tell us of their Dardanelles experiences, and from all accounts they were better off there than where they are at present — in the Ypres Salient. Botel and I find these fellows in the restaurant very decent and friendly, but all meetings between Australians and Canadians are not so fortunate. It was only last week that there was a clash between Canucks and Aussies in an estaminet in Pop. It seems that an Australian Sergeant, after he had had a few drinks, shouted across to the Canadian that the Australians had been brought to France in order to finish off the war — it would never be finished otherwise. A Canadian in reply wanted to know why they had not finished the job they had started on — down in the Dardenelles. Other pleasantries were thrown back and forth and then one about “descendants of convicts” caused fists to fly (as well it might) and there was a general mix-up. But there is not really bad blood between Australians and Canadians — it is nothing more than the good-natured rivalry that is to be expected between soldiers of British Dominions thousands of miles apart; and there’s one thing certain — we have a great respect for the fighting qualities of the Aussies.

Botel and I walk more than half the way back before getting a lift in a lorry. At night in the barn Cutres tells a curious tale. He was on a night-burial party in the Salient, after the heavy fighting in June, burying the dead where they had fallen, both German and our own. when he and other members of the party came across the body of a woman in a German uniform. There would only seem to be two explanations for her presence in the trenches: one, that she had concealed her sex and had joined the army to be with her lover, the other, that she was the mistress of some high German Officer who had taken her into the line with him, but the latter contingency would not appear very likely, as hardly consistent with German Army discipline.

**Sept. 3rd—**Sunday, and a Brigade Church parade. Various honours awarded; Rawlinson, with a Military Medal, is among the recipients.

**Sept. 5th—**Manoeuvres and a sham battle. Wampler and I working with “A” Company. A miserable day, for it rains most of the time, and fellows find it hard to work up much enthusiasm. Glad to get back to the barn. A rumour that we move from here in a couple of days.

**Sept. 7th—**We march off at **6:00** p.m. We don’t know where we are going but we are on our way, and in high spirits. A march of about ten miles brings us to Esquelbecq. We halt at this spot for a couple of hours and then entrain.

**Sept. 8th—**Our train, crawling along, takes us first to Calais and then to Boulogne. On arrival at Boulogne we wonder if we are to embark for Egypt, which has been our rumoured destination so often. We remain on the train however and, after leaving Boulogne, take a south-easterly direction. We leave the train about 9:00 a.m. and march into Agenville. It is now fully evident that we are bound for the Somme. Billets found for us in barns.

**Sept. 9th, 1916 —** After being in France for nearly a year without touching our buttons we now find we have to shine up. The way this old war is being run keeps some of us guessing. Camouflage is recognized as a most important feature of modern warfare, and we are very sensibly dressed in khaki in order to be as invisible as possible to the enemy— and then we have to shine our buttons and badges, and by so doing making it easy for Fritz’s observers, in aeroplanes and balloons, to spot us on the march. We know it is not our own officers’ doing, and probably not Brigade’s doing either for they know some- thing of the muck of the trenches: it is the order of some big Brass Hat who wants to see his little boys looking nice on parade — some Brass Hat who will die in his bed at a ripe old age. It would be more to the point if he would inspect our underwear which he would find crawling with lice though we know that nobody is to blame for this for we get baths and change of clothing whenever possible. The argument that it is necessary for a soldier to shine up in order to keep his self-respect may have been true enough in 'Wellington’s day but it doesn’t go now — certainly not in a Western Canadian battalion where officers and men are all drawn from the same walk in life. We are capable of keeping our self-respect in other ways than by advertising our presence to the enemy and drawing shell fire. But enough of this grousing.

**Sept. 10th —** We take the road early on our march to the Somme. A very happy crowd on the march, is this Signalling Section of ours. As we enter each village, Spence, in the rear of the section, starts up “This is my daughter’s wedding day etc.” and we greet each line vociferously with the requisite cheers or groans. The natives look on amused and no doubt conclude we are a little mad. We get to Pernois in good time and are billeted in barns. A battle royal takes place in the barn at night, the ammunition employed being green apples, windfalls from nearby trees. Half the section, well supplied with ammunition, take up their position on the loft full of straw, which the other half eventually storm. A most desperate affray, for a green apple is not the softest of missies. Strange that men engaged in the grimmest and greatest war the world has ever known should act like a bunch of irresponsible and happy schoolboys behind the lines.

**Sept. 11th —** A ten-mile march to Rubempre. Billeted in barns again. The diary of a German officer, captured on the Somme, is read out to us, and it proves of great interest. It would appear from this that the morale of the battalion he served in was very low; but we have a sneaking suspicion that the translator of the diary has made it appear worse than it is, in order to put the greater heart into us.

**Sept. 12th —** A short six miles march to Contay. Billeted in huts in a wood. Wander around the town in the evening and talk with fellows who have just come out of the trenches on the Thiepval front They tell us they would sooner be there than in the Ypres Salient.

**Sept 13th —** March into Albert. Much cheered by the sight of a group of German prisoners, about twenty in number—the first group of prisoners we have seen since we came to France. As we march through Albert we see the figure of the Virgin leaning over from the tower of the ruined church and we are told it is the firm belief of the natives that the war will end when the figure falls. We camp on a hill outside Albert. Bill English, Pete Livingstone and I fix up a bivouac and make ourselves as comfortable as possible. A rumour round the camp in the evening that the Battalion is to take part soon in a big attack.

**Sept 14th —** Spend day around the vicinity of the camp. In morning visit the great crater which was made by tons of explosives on July 1st — the signal for the big offensive to commence. During the past few days, we have heard a good deal of some mysterious Landships (later known as Tanks) which are to be used in the coming offensive. Get an opportunity in the afternoon of seeing these Landships. Weird looking affairs, heavily armour-plated, with no wheels, but propelled by immense caterpillar chains which encompass the whole machines. There are slits in the armour-plating through which a quick-firing gun, also machine-guns, can be fired. These Landships are said to be able to travel anywhere and it is expected they will give Fritz a rude shock. Hear they are to go up the line to-night.

We are issued with battle flashes, coloured gray and blue, and told to sew these little rectangular patches on our tunics. A nice mess most of us make of the job, Adam Mason’s efforts in particular causing a great deal of merriment (this work was later done by the regimental tailor). See an enemy observation balloon brought down in flames. At 6:30 p.m. our guns open up and firing continues all through the night.

**Sept. 15th** — The big offensive is on and word comes through that the attack early this morning has been a great success.

We cheer a large body of cavalry as they sweep by our camp to go into action. The news has come down the line that the German front is broken and we have visions of the cavalry pursuing the flying enemy. But our hopes are shattered later on, for the cavalry returns without having been able to get into action.

The 49th moves up the line. Our objective is stated to be the German trenches to the right of Courcelette. I am detailed to remain behind — it seems it is the Colonel’s orders, after one brother has been killed, for the other to be kept out of the front line. Fifteen per cent of the section also remains behind, after having drawn lots. We leave the bivouac camp and go over to the Transport Lines.

**Sept 16th —** Good news comes down from the line. Go over to dressing station on the Albert Road and talk to some of our wounded, who report that the attack is going well. Capt. Travers comes down from the line with eight prisoners. Shortly afterwards a big batch of 320 prisoners pass the dressing station. Other batches, large and small, follow and during the day over a thousand prisoners pass by. A good-looking lot physically, but their faces are dull and expressionless and there is no trace of the fighting spirit which they no doubt once possessed.

Witness a rare case of brutality towards a prisoner, a walking wounded case. After getting his wound in the head attended to at the dressing station, he is about to step into an ambulance when he is kicked in the face by one of our own wounded already seated there, and told to “Get out, your b...” The action is strongly resented by others of our wounded, and the German is told to come in, but he is too afraid to venture back. It is the first occasion I have seen a prisoner ill-used and it can no doubt be attributed to the fact that our own wounded man was embittered by suffering and pain.

**Sept. 17th —** The Battalion comes out in the early morning flushed with its first big triumph. After living like rats in the trenches of the Ypres Salient for five months, the 49th has at last met Fritz on even terms and a great victory has been gained. Prisoners taken by the Battalion number over two hundred. Total advance of the 7th Brigade is estimated at 2100 yards and prisoners captured by the Brigade number nearly a thousand. But casualties have been heavy, though lighter than the enemies. The 49th is estimated to have had between three and four hundred killed and wounded. Only about half of our Signalling Section comes out of the line. Ross has been killed, ten have been wounded and seven are reported missing. Hear that Rawlinson, of the Scout Section, is among the casualties, with the loss of an eye. The Battalion camps once more on the hillside vacated on the 15th.

**Sept. 18th — A** wet morning. The Colonel comes round and talks racily of the day and a half’s fighting, comparing notes with the fellows. Morton, Armstrong and Clarke of our section turn up, after having been reported missing. Armstrong and I, while looking through some old trenches, come across some good dugouts. Exchange our soaked bivouac camp for the dug-outs and make a fire with some rustled coke and get dried out a bit. McGillivray shows us a German field telephone which he found in a captured dug-out. A good instrument but heavier and more cumbersome than our own. He disposes of it later to the O.C. of the section for seventy-five francs.

**Sept. 19th —** The Battalion moves into billets in Albert. Everybody glad of the chance of a wash and a shave. Make ourselves as comfortable as possible in the shattered houses which are without doors or windows, but we are able to rustle enough wood to keep a fire going. Our blankets were all turned in before we came down to the Somme, for we are travelling in light order, and the stone floors of the broken down buildings are our only beds. We double up together, with one overcoat beneath and one on top, in an effort to keep warn. The town is shelled during the night, but we have no casualties.

**Sept. 21st —** Day passes uneventfully. Am detailed on working party up the line at night. Two members of the party are wounded by shell splinters. We dig a communication trench and don’t take long about it. On our return have to make wide detour to avoid a munition dump which has been fired. Dead tired on return to billets.

**Sept. 23rd —** The Battalion leaves Albert in the early morning and marches to Warloy, which we reach about 10:00 a.m. Our section is billeted in a big barn with the Scouts. Get a letter from Charlie Wampler, headed “France, Sept. 19th”, which reads:

Friend Hasse,

I will drop you a few lines to let you know that I am still alive and doing fine, considering the wounds I have. All the signallers with “D” Company got hit with me the first time I got it, also the runners and Coy. O.C. Mine was not bad at the time. I dressed the officer and one of the runners and we all started back. Forbes and I were carrying one of the runners when we got hit again. I got my right leg broken and a bad wound in the arm. I crawled about fifty yards to a shell hole and put a tourniquet on my leg to stop the blood. Forbes had his arm broken but as he could walk I told him he might as well try to get out. He started but I don’t know if he made it or not. I lay for about five hours when I was picked up by a 49th S.B. and one of the sanitary men. And I think that ends my fighting. The sister here says that it will be at least six months before I can walk. I am in a fine hospital. It is an American hospital. I think I will be here some time before I go to Blighty. I am on chicken diet, no more bully beef for mine. Tell all the

boys to write to me who care to and be sure to write yourself. I turned the telescope I had in at the 6th Field Ambulance to be returned to the 49th. Be sure and have any mail forwarded. If a parcel of tobacco should come give it to the boys as I can’t chew here. My address is 100739 Pte. C. Wampler, No. 22 General Hospital, B.E.F., France. With best wishes to all the boys, I remain as ever,

Your Pal Wamp.

We got word yesterday that Forbes, mentioned in this letter, got out all right also Radcliffe and Trimble. This leaves only one member of our section missing — Tommy Fox—and there seems no doubt he’s been killed. Now, some men under fire are afraid and show it, others, the big majority, are afraid but don’t show it, and some, not many, have no fear at all. Tommy Fox was most certainly in that last group, and it was not because he lacked imagination. He is going to be missed as a linesman, for whenever a line was broken, Tommy Fox, grinning cheerfully, would set out to repair it, no matter how bad the shelling was. Not that he used to take foolish chances though he was sometimes careless about wearing his steel helmet—I remember a stretcher-bearer, in the Salient, telling him that he would like to see him with his tin lid on, seeing that he was a heavy man, which remark made Tommy’s grin expand more than ever.

**Sept 24th—**On the road again. Get to Vai de Maison in good time. Camp here under canvas. General Lipsett addresses the Battalion and congratulates us on the good work done on Sept. 16. A fine officer with an inspiring presence about him.

**Sept. 26th—**Spend quiet day in Montrelet, which we reached yesterday. Get good news from up the line, where the 1st and 2nd Divisions are reported to have done some fine work. Concert, organized by Capt. Plunkett, is held in the evening in the Y.M.C.A. A most enjoyoble affair, for Capt. Plunkett knows what to give the troops. Hear we are to make a forced march back to the trenches to- morrow.

**Sept. 27th —** March to Contay, some sixteen miles distant. Make good time for all packs are carried on motor lorry. Much cheered en route by news that Thiepval has been captured with a large number of prisoners. Go into camp in the same huts we occupied on the 12th of the month. A draft of Forty-Niners from Blighty, recovered from their wounds, rejoin us here. Evans and Mike Dempsey, members of the draft, rejoin our section. It seems that some of the bunch could have remained in England but they got tired of Blighty and strict camp discipline and asked to be put on the draft in order to be with “the boys” once more, which speaks volumes for the fine comradeship and good fellowship in our Battalion. The Imperial system of returning men from Blighty to strange units would be highly unpopular with Canadians and would not work at all.

**Sept 28th —** On the road again. Roads heavy and march a hard one. Arrive in Albert and we are billeted once more in the buildings that have suffered least in the shelling. News from up the line continues good. More extracts from diaries of captured Germans are read out to us. These extracts, without exception, are of a very gloomy nature and the morale of the enemy, according to these diaries, must be at a very low ebb, for no Canadian soldier, certainly no member of our Battalion, would make such entries. But- we remain a little skeptical regarding these translated extracts which we know have been prepared with the one object of gingering up the troops.

**Sept. 30th —** Spend a lazy day in Albert. Am on working party at night, building up a road for the big guns. Our artillery very active. As we walk along in the dark it is disconcerting, to say the least, - when one of our hidden guns opens up, only a few yards away.

**Oct. 2nd —** The Battalion goes up to Tara Hill in the morning and in the afternoon proceeds to the trenches. Macdonald, Foster, Dancocks and myself of the Signalling Section, are left behind. A wet miserable day.

**Oct. 3rd—**Go up the line at night with a ration party. After the recent rains the ground is one great morass and the going is heavy. Struggling through the mud is an effort in itself, and the loads we are carrying make the going a lot harder. But the line is quiet, there being little shelling on either side. On the way back Macdonald and I try to board a motor lorry which unexpectedly comes along. As we run after it we throw our rifles in at the back in order to be able to climb in the easier; but it is my luck then to step into a hole and fall flat on the cobble stones. Macdonald stops to help me up and the lorry rumbles away in the darkness. We are not concerned at the loss of our rifles, for they can be picked up anywhere, but in our played out condition, we much regret having lost the lorry. Land back caked over thick with mud.

**Oct. 4th—**The Battalion is to come out to-night and those of us who have stayed behind go up to Tara Hill to fix up the dugouts a bit for the fellows when they arrive. The order is changed however, and we are told that the Battalion will be billeted once more in Albert. The Battalion comes out in “column of lumps” at all hours of the night. Everybody in awful shape, being hardly recognizable for the mud which is plastered all over them. See a group of kilties of the 1st Division coming out minus their kilts, which their owners had discarded while struggling through the mud. We had a good fire blazing for the section and they feel different men after a supper of steak and potatoes, in fairly plentiful quantities for once, and a good rum ration. Casualties have been light this trip in the line.

**Oct. 5th —** The Battalion spends the day, fortunately a fine one, in scraping the mud off clothing, equipment and rifles. We can be thankful we are no longer cursed with the Ross rifle which would have been utterly useless under these conditions. Fritz had his Marines in the trenches opposite us this last trip. One of them, a big fellow in a dark uniform, came across and gave himself up. He was happy as a clam at high tide at having negotiated No Man’s Land successfully and wanted to hug our man who took him prisoner. In the evening half of our section go to a movie show. A sloppy senti- mental film but the gang, led by Bill Frame, make an uproarious burlesque out of it. If the unfortunate heroine had been there that night, and had heard the ribaldry of the troops, it would have been enough to have made her forswear movie acting for the rest of her life.

**Oct. 8th —** The Battalion is to go up the line again to-morrow. Everything points to another big offensive and the Battalion is expecting to “go over the top” again. Fellows cheerful and there is a “we should worry” attitude everywhere. Everybody confident and hoping for a repetition of the success gained on Sept. 16th.

**Oct. 7th —** Battalion leaves Tara Hill for the trenches at 2:00 p.m. An attack is to be pulled off early to-morrow morning. Of the Signalling Section four of us remain behind — Armstrong, Mason, Cutres and myself.

**Oct. 8th —** Bad news comes down to us from the line. The fellows went over the top early this morning with Regina Trench as objective, but our artillery had not been effective enough and they found themselves confronted by impassable wire, behind which the enemy was in force. Gallantry availed nothing under such circumstances and the Battalion was mowed down, those not wounded taking refuge in shell-holes. It is rumoured that the Battalion has been all but wiped out.

Corpl. Batt and Botel return from hospital. We did not expect Batt would be back so soon and we had just opened up a parcel that had come for him, and are digging in to it, when he walks in. He is at once invited to sit down and have something of his own parcel! It is customary, and agreed on by all, that parcels that come for men in hospital should be opened up and shared by the section. The same thing is done if a parcel comes for a man after he has been killed. The sender in such a case is naturally written to and told that the parcel has been opened up and shared by his comrades. In two such instances the sender, a mother in each case, has continued to send parcels to the section.

**Oct. 9th —** We go to Tara Hill and prepare camp for the Battalion, but we are later detailed to billets in Albert. The Battalion comes out of the line less than 150 strong. Our section has been hard hit again, Shipman having been killed and Morton and Ford reported missing; Widger wounded. Our attack yesterday, owing to lack of the neces- sary artillery preparation, was almost a complete failure, only a few of “D” Company succeeding in getting a foothold in Regina Trench. The German Marines opposing us were evidently stout fighters, and decent fellows too, for last night their stretcher-bearers and first-aid men helped in No Man’s Land to fix up our wounded before they were brought back to our lines.

It is a dispirited group at supper this evening. Those who have been in the lines this trip have been as near hell as anybody on this earth could ever get, and they are far from their normal selves. Evans has been unusually quiet but the rum ration loosens up his pent-up emotions and he goes into hysterics, we try to calm him but then realize that it is best to let him give full rein to his feelings. It is evi- dent that he is quite oblivious to our presence and imagines himself to be back in a shell-hole just outside the unbroken German wire. He is there with Shipman, and a German sniper is trying to get at them as they lay at the bottom of the shell-hole. The bullets are passing over them but only missing them by inches. Shipman at last can stand it no longer and he jumps up to the lip of the shell-hole in order to return the fire, in spite of Evans efforts to prevent him. Shipman is killed almost as soon as he shows himself, and his body rolls back into the shell-hole. It is night before Evans is able to leave the shell- hole and get back to our lines. Evans, in his ravings, has given us an absolute picture of everything that happened, and the greatest actor who has ever lived could not have made it more vivid to us as we stand around, motionless and silent living it all over again with him. At the end of it all we are thankful to see him go off into a heavy sleep.

**Oct. 10th —** Take the road to Warloy in the afternoon. Packs are carried on transport and we make good time. Pass some battalions of the 4th Division on their way in. A fine-looking lot, the kilties in particular, and up to full strength. Feel they will get Regina Trench all right if the artillery gives them anything like a fair show. Billeted in barns on our arrival in Warloy. Mike Dempsey, after a run of luck with his Crown and Anchor board, stands drinks all round for the section at a near-by estaminet.

**Oct. 11th —** Battalion spends day in Warloy. Get paid in afternoon. A rowdy evening in the barn. Never so many of the fellows drunk before, but who can blame them for trying to forget the hell they went through up the line three days ago.

**Oct. 12th —** March to Vai de Maison, where we camp for the night in tents. The Colonel comes round in the evening and chews the rag with the fellows. Tells us to be ready for an early start tomorrow morning. Gives us a good hint that we are moving right out of the Somme district. Glad to get this news, for the Battalion, since last March, has been in the toughest parts of the Western Front, and some quiet trenches will be welcome for a change.

**Oct. 13th —** Set off at 6:30 a.m. and after a long hike we reach Bereaucourt. Billeted in an old barn with the Scouts. Spend evening in **Y.M.C.A.** writing letters. A cold night and unable to keep warm after we turn in, for we are still without blankets.

**Oct. 15th —** Still resting at Bereaucourt. Church parade in morning is cancelled owing to rain. In evening a bunch of us go to the R.C.R. band concert, which we much enjoy. Our section provides the guard at night, with Mike Dempsey as Corporal. In orders that we move to- morrow.

**Oct. 16th —** A short march to Berneiul, being only a matter of six or seven kilometers. A big orchard nearly is full of apples and the kindly old farmer points out the best eating ones. In return we help him and his family pick the fruit which is used for cider making. Trees growing almost wild for no attempt seems to be made in this part of the country to cultivate or prune them at all. Another draft of old Forty-niners return to the Battalion, amongst them being Sergt. Kingdom.

**Oct. 19th —** Still at Berneiul. Do a little visual signalling in the orchard, but it is not taken very seriously. Blankets are at last issued to us, and how we welcome them, after being in light marching order and without them for so long. Am detailed for guard at night with Mackensie, Clarke and Collin. Get orders to move to Waraus tomorrow.

**Oct. 21st —** Leave Waraus, where we camped last night, for Gouay. A hike of fifteen miles with full packs. Hear we are to go into the trenches on the 24th. The line we take over is apparently quiet, but we do not expect it will stay that way for long. Our destination to-morrow is Cambligneul, a long day’s march.

**Oct. 23rd —** Leave camp at Cambligneul for St. Eloi four or five miles distant. Remain in St. Eloi until 5:00 p.m. when we proceed up to the reserve line. Am detailed with Hdqrs. Signallers. We relieve the 19th Battalion of the 2nd Londoners, a fine cheerful lot.

**Oct. 24th —** Move up early to the Neuville St. Vaast front. Corpl. Batt, Browse, Mackensie and myself on duty on Hdqrs. phone, which means only a six hour shift each. Mason is also with us, acting as cook. Front line is very quiet. Accomodation for everyone in deep shell-proof dug-outs.

**Oct. 26th -—** On the six-hour shift ending at 4:00 a.m. Line quiet and few messages coming through. No casualties since the Battalion took over the line two days ago. Go out with Browse and get a wel- come bath and change of clothing. Bill English rejoins the Battalion.

Go down for rations at night. At the ration dump we are under the impression we are two bags short and we determine to make them good somehow. Consequently when the Q.M. shouts out “Hdqrs. officers,” one of our party (no names, no pack drill!) replies “Here" and, taking the proffered bags, makes off in the darkness. We then make the discovery that we are not short of any bags after all, but we decide to hang on to the officers’ rations. It is of course the blackest of crimes to swipe rations from fellow rankers, but Hdqrs. officers are fair game for we know they will not starve. On our arrival at the dug-out we find the swiped bags contain tinned chicken, tinned fruit and all kinds of delicacies. We have a rare old feed, during which we hear the Adjutant, over the wire, phoning up all the companies in turn and asking each O.C. if he has got Hdqrs. rations by mistake.

**Oct. 27th —** The acting R.S.M. pays our dug-out a visit. He tells us the Hdqrs. officers’ rations were swiped last night, and the Adjutant has detailed him to do a little sleuthing and find out who has stolen them. It is very evident that he does not suspect us as the culprits, and we make various helpful suggestions to aid him in his search. Not sorry when he takes his departure for had he searched our dug-out he would have found some of the missing rations under one of the bunks.

**Oct. 28th—**Line remains very quiet. Practically no artillery fire and only an occasional trench mortar or rifle grenade falls in our sector. Only one slight casualty since we took over the line four days ago. We have had nothing as cushy as this since we left the Kemmel front. Our dugout, besides being shell proof is both comfortable and roomy. At night we turn our rum ration over to Mason and he makes a rum toddy. As we sit round supping it out of our mess-tins, in the candle-lit dug-out, we agree that this old war might well be a good deal worse than it is.

**Oct. 29th, 1916—**Go back to reserve in Neuville St. Vaast. Signalling dug-out very comfortable, as dug-outs go, and we are obviously in for an easy time. Corpl. Batt gets away on leave. Get the news that the 49th has been awarded its first V.C. — “Chip” Kerr. As we hear the news that tale is told again how, on Sept. 16th near Courcelette, an advance along an enemy trench was held up by a barricade . . . also by the fact that bombs were running low. Kerr, first bayonet-man, was in the lead of our party and at this moment it was in the cards that he should be hit in the hand by an exploding “spud masher,” which was thrown from the other side of the barricade. Stung by the wound, Kerr leaped out of the trench and ran forward, only to find himself facing a trench alive with Fritzes; but he continued running towards them, emptying his rifle as he did so. Confronted by this sudden apparition of a berserk and blood-stained Canadian with a blazing rifle they threw up their hands and surrendered. Others of our party were almost on the heels of Kerr, and the Germans, who on being rounded up proved to be sixty-two in number, were taken down the line, though our party numbered but eight. We feel that history is in the making with the award of the Battalion’s first Victoria Cross, for in the years to come the story of Kerr’s valour will be told in many an Albertan home, in the same manner as is the tale of how Horatius held the bridge still told around firesides in Rome.

**Oct. 30th —** A home from home all right back here in reserve. Rats are the main disturbing influence and they are everywhere. Four of us on six hour shifts on the phone. Area quiet and few messages passing over the wires. Hear that the 5.9 gun which the fellows captured on Sept. 16th is to be taken to Edmonton after the war is over. Go out in afternoon and get a welcome bath and change of clothes.

**Nov. 2nd —** The last day in reserve, for the battalion is to return to the front tomorrow. The line, held at present by the R.C.R.’s remains quiet, nothing coming over except an occasional trench mortar. Go down for rations at night. Glad to get a little exercise.

**Nov 3rd —** We take over the line from the R.C. R’s. We are indeed fortunate in the deep shellproof dugouts on this front. The dug-out we are in has evidently been constructed by an engineer who had vision, for the passage leading down to it has a sharp turning at right angles half way down, so that in the event of an enemy raid, bombs thrown from the trench would explode in the passage and would not reach the occupants of the dug-out. Our dug-out is shared by three Imperial artillery fellows an acting bombardier and two gunners, all of them youngsters. It is comical the way the acting bombardier lords it over the two unfortunate gunners, but one of them is inclined to be insubordinate and, rather shamelessly, we egg him on—to such an extent that, to our unhallowed delight, he comes to blows with his superior officer. The battle is not a very desperate one however for the two combatants are parted before either of them gets hurt, and it has the happy result of making the bombardier feel less important— at least temporarily.

**Nov 5th —** Hear the guns on the Somme rumbling all day. Evidently a big offensive is on there. Our line remains quiet. Get word that leave has been cut down to one third the usual rate — a disappointment to those topping the list who are sweating on their leaves. The three Imperial artillery boys leave us and we are glad to have a little quiet in the dug-out. These artillery chaps are not up to the standard of the splendid Lahore Battery fellows we worked with in the Ypres Salient, but that is hardly to be expected. A “C” coy. runner gets killed, the first man to be killed since we took over this front two weeks ago. Am on night shift as usual. Time passes quickly, for some 48th Battn. pioneers, who are at work enlarging dug outs on this front, prove very entertaining and cheerful.

**Nov. 7th —** More wet cold weather. The recent heavy rains are causing the trenches to fall in, and dug outs are leaking and in some cases flooded out. McKay and Bob Wyndham are reported to have done a good bit of work to-day — picked off four Fritzes on an advanced post in No Man’s Land. Those of us near the top of the leave list get another disappointment to-day with the news that all leave has been cancelled for the time being.

**Nov. 8th —** We move out of the line for a four-day rest. Trenches crumbling in everywhere and we have to wade through mud and water over our boot tops. Billetted in huts. On phone duty at night in Orderly Room.

**Nov. 9th —** No parades and everybody, has an easy time. Get paid in afternoon. Battalion concert at night in the Y.M.C.A. A ten- franc bill, offered as a prize for the best turn by a member of the audience, results in a lot of fun, the audience doing the judging. The Colonel is present and in great form. Makes a speech in which he tells us of the wonderful time he is going to have at a forthcoming convention — he adds that he will think of us floundering around in the mud, while he, in a comfortable armchair, is smoking a big fat cigar! The speech is greeted with a great deal of laughter and cries of “Have a heart, Billy, have a heart!” Billy concludes by saying that he hopes the war will be over next winter and that we will be sitting round fires the fuel of which has been honestly come by. The Y.M.C.A. Captain, an Imperial, in charge of the concert in a few remarks at the close says that in his varied army career he has never run across such a relationship between Colonel and men, and he is warm in his congratulations. Billy’s remark about “fuel honestly come by” brings back the memory of a cold night at Kemmel a year ago when he came into “A” coy. camp and told us where we could get plenty of good firewood; but he added, in a tone that implied that we should watch our step that the place was out of bounds!

**Nov. 11th —** Keen interest is being shown by the troops in the U.S.A, elections, with Woodrow Wilson the favourite candidate. Get issued with new gas masks, and we test them out wearing them in a gas filled room. Can breathe easily in them and we get no trace of gas. A great improvement on the old sack helmets which, if they saved you from gas, just about suffocated you at the same time. Also issued with sleeveless leather jerkins. A very sensible rig, for they run rain and at the same time allow a free use of the arms.

**Nov. 13th —** Move back into the line, taking over from the R.C.R.’s. Mackensie, Browse and I on duty on H. Q’rs. phone. Batt returns from leave and tells us what a good time he has had. A flock of wild geese fly over the trenches and both Fritz and ourselves blaze away at them with rifles and machine-guns—so for once we have a common target. But the birds are flying high and none are brought down—but how good a wild goose would taste after trench fare.

**Nov. 13th —** Weather turns bitterly cold, but we are able to keep warm in the dug-outs. The guns on the Somme continue to rumble and we hear that a big victory has been gained there. Our own front continues quiet, only desultory shelling taking place. Casualties few and far between. While on duty at night get a gas alarm buzzed over the wires — the sender, having his mask on, not being in a position to use the phone. Hurriedly arouse the runner, who warns everybody, and we don our masks. It turns out however to be a false alarm and instructions to “stand down” soon come through.

**Nov. 18th —** Get relieved in afternoon by the R.C.R’s. and we go into reserve at Neuville St. Vaast. Meet Davidson in the trenches. States he is opening up a Y.M.C.A. here in a day or two.

**Nov. 20th —** While on the night shift hear a lot of bombing and machine-gun fire on the right of our front, where the C.M.R’s. are. Word comes through later that the C.M.R’s made a successful raid and brought back a prisoner. Ford returns to the Section—the first signaller entitled to two wound stripes.

**Nov. 23rd —** In the line again. We get a new trench mortar on our front, which throws a 250 lb. shell and great things are hoped of it. Get the good news that passes have opened up again.

**Nov. 27th —** A mine, laid by our engineers, is blown up on our left, on the front of the 14th. Battn. who consolidate the position. A very lively half hour, and our own front comes in for considerable shelling, some heavy stuff landing around H. Qrs.

**Nov. 29th —** Back in the rest camp. Go to baths at Morieulle with Botel and Clarke. We get a fifty franc pay in the afternoon, after which a good time is had by all. Our section sit round the stove at night, and the whiskey and vin blanc goes round until several of the gang pass out and are carried to their bunks. There are also rowdy scenes, and a scrap, at the other end of the hut, which is occupied by the bombers.

**Dec. 2nd —** Weather bitterly cold, but we are able to rustle up enough wood to keep a good fire going all the time. The stove, somewhat similar to what you see in a lumberjacks’ bunkhouse, will take almost cord length wood. Am told that I go on pass on Dec. 4th. Get complete new outfit from the Q.M. stores. Battalion is to return to the line tomorrow.

**Dec. 4th —** In afternoon proceed to Avenues, getting a lift on a limber. Leave train does not pull out until late at night. Our Journey to Boulogne is very slow for we get shunted into sidings frequently in order to make way for ambulances and ammunition trains. A most uncomfortable journey, the train is badly crowded and it is very cold, for the windows of the car are broken. But nobody minds, for we are on our way to Blighty.

**Dec. 5th —** Ourjourney to Boulogne has been so delayed that we miss the noon boat. Marched up the hill to the rest camp for the night. A very mixed crowd there — Imperials, Australians and Canadians. We are not expected and there is no supper awaiting us, but we are able to assuage our hunger at the Expeditionary Force Canteen. Wit- ness a little incident there which warms the heart. Two young Imperial kilties, returning from leave, are discussing in low tones how to get the most satisfying results from their worldly wealth, which amounted at that moment to the sum of fourpence. A Canadian overhears them and, slipping a five franc bill into their hands, disappears into the crowd before they have time to thank him or recover from their astonishment. We are crowded into tents, almost a man to a seam, and on lying down it is impossible to find room for one’s feet. Under ordinary circumstances tempers might be frayed, but as we are going on leave everybody is in good spirits so we make the best of things.

**Dec. 6th —** Reveille at 5:00 a.m. No breakfast for us but manage to get a cup of hot tea at the canteen before we are marched down to the boat. The hour and a half crossing to Folkstone proves rough and a number of us suffer. Get to London in the early afternoon. A bath at the Maple Leaf Club, a real bath — not rationed two or three minutes as in France with two or more fellows under each shower. Also receive new underwear so at long last can feel really free from lice.

**Dec. 7th —** Wonderful to be back in Blightly once more. After the hard ground a real bed is so comfortable that it takes some getting used to. One is reminded of the tale of the Canadian on leave who found himself, on going to bed, tossing around and unable to sleep. At length in desperation he got up and laid down on the floor, and promptly went off into a sound slumber! But joking apart, how luxurious a real bed can be after the misery, hardships, and filth of the trenches. We may envy those who have cushy jobs in England but what do they know of the luxury of white sheets and soft bed, knowing nothing else every night.

**Dec. 15th —** Back in London after spending nine days at home. My leave is up but decide to take another couple of days, as every good Forty-niner does — after all, I seem to remember the acting Adjutant saying that a man was a prize fool if he did not take an extra day or two. Go to the show “Pick-a-dilly” with a 10th Battn. fellow, and enjoy it thoroughly.

**Dec. 17 th —** An early reveille at the Maple Leaf Club, for our train leaves Victoria at 6:15 a.m. Discover that a bottle of Johnnie Walker has been swiped from my pack — but the culprit only took one bottle and was good enough to leave a second. Must endeavour to get that back to the Section, as all others returning from leave have done. On arrival at Folkstone we get caged up for an hour and a half. Boat leaves at 2:30 p.m. and we have a good crossing. Marched once more up the hill to the camp on the summit. Brings back the recollection of the landing of the 49th more than a year ago. Major Wilson, temporarily in charge, was marching at the head of the Battalion and feeling very proud to be on French soil at last; but the grand old warrior, as he marched spryly up the hill, forgot in the exultation of the moment, the heavily burdened men behind him—carrying, through somebody’s misguided efforts, perhaps the biggest packs that had ever been taken to France, and wearing new boots not yet broken in. The battalion stood the pace for a long time up that steep hill but at length somebody raised the cry, “Have a heart there in front,” a cry promptly taken up by dozens of throats. Major Wilson at once called a halt by the roadside. Then, coming down amongst us, he said with great feeling, “D....it men, I have a heart, you know I have a heart.” The general and respectful chorus of assent that followed quickly assured him that fact had never been doubted, and after the incident there was perhaps a still finer understanding between the old Major and the men. On such little incidents, it can safely be said, has the morale of the 49th been built up.

**Dec. 18th** — Arrived back at Ecoivres. Battalion should have come out of the line yesterday, but they are doing an extra day in the trenches and will not be out until to-night. It seems that two of our men, a new draft man by the name of Styran and another fellow, were overpowered and captured while on an advanced post in No Man’s Land. The possibility was not overlooked that Fritz may have got from them the information that the Battalion was being relieved on the 17th — hence the extra day in the line. Needless to remark the information would not have been given voluntarily but it might have been obtained by a ruse — perhaps by the old dodge of a German with a thorough knowledge of English, and dressed in one of our uniforms, playing the part of another friendly Canadian prisoner. But we also secured a prisoner this trip in the line so perhaps Fritz too is doing an extra day in the trenches.

**Dec. 20th —** Battalion out at rest. A heavy bombardment up the line. Hear later that the C.M.R.’s have raided the enemy lines, inflicted heavy casualties, and returned with 58 prisoners. Their own casualties are reported very light and the raid is said to be one of the most successful that has ever been pulled off on the Western Front. Good old C.M.R.’s. The C.M.R.’s, on this front and on the Somme, have certainly made up for the bad luck they ran into at Plugstreet and in the Ypres Salient. Never more will they be known as the “See ’Em Runs,” a name which, by the way, they never deserved. After an argument in the evening two members of the Section, who shall be nameless, have a contest at a local estaminet, to see who can hold the most liquor — a contest financed by Mike Dempsey out of the proceeds of his Crown and Anchor board. After many mixed drinks, glass for glass, and a great deal of hilarity, one of the two drops under the table. As he is dead to the world, McGillivray picks him up and heaves him over his shoulder, and in this manner, escorted by a rollicking crowd, the loser returns to the camp.

**Dec. 24th —** Battalion returns to the trenches. Am detailed to remain out of the line at Ecoivres with Dancocks. Browse, who is about to go on leave, also stays out of the line.

**Dec. 25th. —** Christmas Day,but with the Battalion in the line no sort of celebration takes place and it is little different to any other sort of day. Help Dancocks fix up the rations for the fellows in the line. They are expecting some gasoline for their primus cookers, but the Q.M. stores have none to spare, so Dancocks and I set out to rustle some. Watch a lorry, with three tins of gasoline in a rack on the side, pull up alongside the road, and we see the driver and his spare man preparing to settle down for the night inside their vehicle. On the light going out we purloin one of the tins. After all, the troops up the line need it worse than the lorry driver, and in any case, we have left him two tins. Botel comes back from his aeroplane course — a course taken to improve co-operation between aeroplanes and signallers on the ground. Bo is much dissappointed at not having had the opport- unity of going up in the air.

**Dec. 29th —** Am transferred to the Transport Section. Report to Lt. Hudson and he instructs me to give the grooms a hand for the time being — states there may be a job as driver later on. Quarters of the Section are in a bunk-house — crowded quarters but warm, for there is a good stove in the hut. A great bunch of fellows and there is a lively time after supper in the evening.

**Dec. 31st —** At night am detailed to ride up the line to Neuville St. Vaast with Capt. Travers—my first experience of an army saddle. On our return find a big crowd in Ecoivres and the Princess Pat pipers are playing the New Year in. After fixing up the horses, go round to the Q.M. stores for a rum ration. The rum must be plentiful to-night, or else Tommy Walkeden thinks I look very cold, for he gives me a Players cigarette tin nearly full of the old **S.R.D.**

# **1917**

**Jan. 1st (1917)—**Wake up with a nice thick head. Curse you Tommy! As it is New Year’s Day it is regarded as a holiday more or less and only essential duties are done. In the evening, as we are seated round the stove, Maxey, who looks after one of the watercarts and in this capacity is attached to the Transport Section, gives us a most learned discourse on the horse. In this talk he traces the horse family, or the Equidae, back to prehistoric times when, in those remote ages, the animal is believed to have had a cloven hoof and to have been no bigger than a fox. He makes it all quite interesting but at the close of it Bob Magrath raises a great laugh by remarking, “I thought you knew nothing about horses, Maxey,” — the point being that Maxey recently got himself excused from night picket duty on the grounds that he didn’t know anything about horses and would not know what to do if one got into difficulties.

**Jan. 7th —** Having an easy time in the Transport Lines. Major Weaver and Capt. Winser ride to the military school at Hermanville and Tom James and I ride there with them as orderlies, and in order to bring their horses back. We come across a roadside drunk, a 1st. Division man, and Major Weaver, with that consideration which he always shows for everybody, dismounts from his horse and gets the man up on his feet. He later details a couple of men who are passing to assist the fellow to his camp.

**Jan. 9th —** George Harper, Tony Peterson and I go to a house in Ecoivres and enjoy a supper of eggs and chips. Good to get a satisfying meal once in a while. George is in reminiscent mood and he tells yarn after yarn of his old railroading days. A happy evening, what with pre-war memories and our plans of what we are going to do after the war is over — and there is a general feeling of optimism that it cannot last much longer. On picket duty, second shift, on my return to the lines. A bitterly cold night and it is difficult to keep warm.

**Jan. 14th —** The Colonel, returning from leave, drops into the bunkhouse and chews the rag with the fellows. Some company men are in the bunkhouse awaiting a medical board, and Billy wishes them luck and tells them he hopes they will make Blighty. Cold weather continues, with hard frosts every night. Fuel has been fairly plentiful lately, but there is a scarcity this evening so “Waffles” and I go out to rustle some from the dump down the road. Arriving there we find that the big heap of coke is being guarded by a sentry, so subterfuge is necessary. I go ahead and keep the sentry in conversation, on Waffles’ suggestion, while he fills his sack full of coke from the back of the pile.

**Jan. 22nd —**Cold snap continues, with hard frosts every night. Natives around here say it is the coldest winter for many years. Battalion is fortunate being on a front with warm dug outs. At night ride up the line with Capt. Travers. Take Dundee, the horse Major Wilson thought so much of — though his appearance is about the best part of him. Remember what a Forty-two once said at Shornecliffe, “When the 49th march by our camp we all turn out, particularly to see Major Wilson riding past on Dundee.”

**Jan. 28th —** Great jubilation as we hear of the raid that was pulled off to-day by twenty-two “C” company men, all of whom had volunteered for the job. They go over in the spirit of schoolboys on a holiday and raise merry hell in Fritz’s line. Stokes shells are hurled down the dug outs when the occupants ignore commands, shouted down the entrances, for them to come up and surrender. Ten Germans are killed, and eight prisoners secured and brought back to our lines. The killed include a German officer, who was sent to his happy hunting grounds by one of his runners while doing some daring trench reconnoitering on his own account. The raid such a success, and so entirely unexpected by Fritz, that our party do not have a single cas- ualty. Eight special ten-day leaves in Blighty are allotted as a reward and the raiders draw lots for them — pity every man in the party cannot get a leave out of it. Battalion comes out of the line at night.

**Feb. 1st —** Several cases of mumps in the Division, and all estaminents and canteens are placed out of bounds. Spend evening with the signallers in their billets — hear some interesting details of the last trip in the line.

**Feb.5th—**News that the U.S.A, has severed diplomatic relations with Germany is received with elation, and we all hope it will not be long before war is declared. It is the one topic of conversation in the bunkhouse at night. Stafford says that Uncle Sam will want a finger in the pie when peace is declared, and he suggests facetiously that the U.S.A, might offer to trade the Philippines off for Ireland in order to be able to raise her own policemen!

**Feb. 6th —** Battalion back in the trenches. A good yarn about Riley, “B” coy. runner comes down the line. A portion of our front line was smashed in by one of Fritz’s “pencils,” and as Riley had been seen there a moment before, it was concluded he was buried. Capt. McQueen and a party at once started to dig for him frantically, hoping against hope to find him still alive. At this point Riley returns to the scene, saw them making the dirt fly and, taking in the situation, remarked, “If you expect to find me under there you’re out of luck.”

**Feb. 9th —** Tom James., Duffield and I take the horses out for exercise, riding one and leading another. Tom has spent the noon hour in the canteen, he says it is his birthday, or somebody else’s, and he is feeling good. So are the horses and we ride through Ecoivres and along the road to Acq as John Gilpin must have ridden through London Town. In the early evening Fritz springs a mine on the R.C.R.’s about a dozen of whom are reported dead and buried. Fritz does not follow it up by coming over, but all our guns open up and give him a good strafing.

**Feb. 12th —** Cold snap shows no sign of breaking up. Fellows in the line are relieved by the 25th Battn. and we are to go to Bruay for a rest. A Scottish division march into Ecoivres in the evening. A braw looking lot and, unlike most Canadian kilties, they keep to their kilts all winter.

**Feb. 13th —**Five o’clock reveille. Transport Section is kept busy until noon when the Battalion sets out for Bruay. Arrive there at dusk. Some confusion regarding billets, but eventually find a loft to sleep in.

**Feb. 14th —** The good people of Bruay cannot do enough for us, which speaks volumes for the Canadian battalions which have been here for the past two or three months. In the evening go with Geo. Atkins and Duffield to see film taken on the Somme. Very realistic, and whoever took them must have been right on the heels of the fighting, for one sees the dead and wounded in the trenches, and some of the prisoners are to be seen with their hands still uplifted and with cowed expressions on their faces. These films should prove good propaganda against war. We hear with mixed feelings that Billy has been promoted and is going to leave us.

**Feb. 17th —** A general thaw sets in, which we welcome. Get paid in afternoon. The Battalion mascot, recently acquired in Bruay, parades with the troops—a cute youngster about seven years of age. He signs his name, is given five francs, and salutes very smartly. In evening go over and have supper with the Signallers — find them ensconced in very comfortable billets.

**Feb. 21st —** Billy inspects the Battalion on parade — his last inspection as Colonel, for he is leaving us to take over the 1st Brigade. After he has made his speech, in which he bids the Battalion au revoir, the fellows cheer him as perhaps they have never cheered before. Memories go back to other parades — to the first parades at Edmonton, with Billy’s voice booming down the Exhibition grounds. We felt even then that we were under one who knew how to mould a regiment into shape and give it the right morale, aided as he was by an Adjutant, in Major Hobbins, who knew just about all that could be learnt about soldiering. We are well aware that all battalions have not had such a fortunate getaway at the start, for no one who has been at the front will deny the existence of the odd hoodoo battalion, fortunately rare, which never seems to do anything right; the battalion that is jumpy in the line and comes in for curses of other outfits in supports and reserve when they have to “stand-to” needlessly—a state of affairs which can be attributed to a C.O. who, lacking spirit himself, is unable to instill morale into his battalion.

History records again and again how even indifferent men have been inspired to acts of immortal glory by great leaders. We of the 49th have no mean opinion of ourselves and we feel that, under Billy’s leadership, a spirit has entered into the Battalion that can never die while the war lasts — nay, a spirit that will outlast the war and will endure throughout the ages. But if anything about immortal glory was said to a cold, hungry and lousy Forty-niner in the trenches some most unprintable comment would probably be forthcoming!

**Feb. 22nd, 1917 —** Time passing very pleasantly in Bruay, George Adkins, Len, Pat and I have little to do but look after the saddlehorses and keep them exercised, for they are seldom required by the officers. Get a stove fixed up in our loft and we make the place as comfortable as possible. Buy some eggs and fry them in our mess-tins — the best supper we’ve had for some time.

**Feb. 24th —** Inspection of Transport Section in the square of the town. I get the job of riding orderly to Capt. Hudson. Transport Sc. certainly makes a fine showing on parade, men, horses and everything concerned being in the pink of condition. Remarkable how fit men and horses can keep on the meagre rations received.

In afternoon the Battalion has a football match with the 42nd. There is a compulsory parade to the game — a great mistake on the part of someone. Fellows resent it strongly and root their utmost for the 42nd., who win the game 3 - nil. If the attendance at the game had not been compulsory everyone would have gone there of his own accord and would have enjoyed the game and likely have cheered our team to victory. Whoever was at the back of the order for the parade to the ground surely knew little of human nature, for when sport is enforced it becomes work, and vice versa. One is reminded of the tale of Huckleberry Finn (or is it Tom Sawyer) who was ordered by his aunt to whitewash a fence on a hot summer’s afternoon when he wanted to go fishing. But he gets a brain wave when he sees the other boys coming along with their fishing-rods. He pretends to be enjoying himself so much, and shows such seeming reluctance to quit, that eventually he is able to sit in the shade of a tree and see the whitewashing of the entire fence done by his friends.

**Feb. 28th —** An issue of “Punch”’ which I get from home to- day gives a description of a French town behind the lines which could easily be Bruay — “A town which is in reality an ordinary dull and dirty provincial place, but to the tired warrior is a haven of rest and a paradise of gaiety and good things.” And so Bruay is to the 49th after the trenches.

George Adkins, Len and I spend the evening drinking coffee and playing dominoes with the good people where we are billeted—a middle-aged couple and their daughter Suzanne. Coffee is all they have to offer in the way of hospitality for they hardly know where their next meal is coming from. They have evidently seen better days, and Suzanne tells us as much, in her broken English, concluding with a shrug of the shoulders and a resigned “C’est la guerre.”

**March 1st —** Hear of a house on the far side of the town where a bath can be obtained. George Adkins and I go over there in the afternoon and are rewarded by being able to get a really good bath for the modest charge of a franc, with a cup of coffee thrown in afterwards. The people there are well educated Belgium refugees, with a good knowledge of English, having spent eleven months in England after being forced out of their homes. A youngster in the house, about six years of age speaks English as though he had spent all his life in the country.

In the evening go to an entertainment put on by the Princess Pats’ concert party. An excellent show as usual. Burlesque of Uncle Tom’s Cabin particularly funny. High spot of the evening is the rendering of “Where are the boys of the village to-night” by the beauty chorus. The roof of the building is nearly raised as the “girls”, led by Slim Maclaren and Lilley, caper around the stage singing “Some are playing banker, others Crown-and-Anchor. That’s where they are to-night, etc.”

**March 3rd —** Rations have been almost under the bare subsistence mark lately — just enough to keep body and soul together—but our pay helps out a lot in a town such as Bruay. This evening we buy pork chops and potatoes, which Suzanne cooks for us. We invite her and her parents to join us, for we sit down to the meal in their kitchen, and we have the best feed we’ve had since landing in France. What a joy there is in a good meal, eaten off clean dishes in a warm room. We spend the rest of the evening trying to understand each other’s French and English. Suzanne has all the vivacity and animation of her race and we find her broken English very entertaining.

**March 5th —** Take Dundee out and get on some turf and give him a good run. A spring-like day and it feels good to be alive. Spend evening in M. A.C. canteen, playing chess with one of the Princess Pats. Always enjoy an evening there. The place is well lighted and there is plenty of good literature scattered around. In addition, there is a piano and often a group round it roaring out the old favourites. The place seems to irradiate the joy of good comradeship — the great redeeming feature of life on active service.

**March 7th —** The cold snap returns — a bitter wind all day, so we stay in and hug the stove. In the evening go to a good show put on by the 9th. Field Ambulance. A good yarn is told of a Scotchman who had his left arm blown off at the elbow one night while in No Man’s Land. Sometime later after his arm or what was left of it had been attended to at the dressing-station, it was discovered he was missing. Eventually he was found — he had gone back to No Man’s Land and was wandering around there trying to find his wristwatch!

**March 9th —** Sir Robert Borden inspects the 7th Brigade. Am not on inspection myself — one decided advantage of being attached to the Transport Section. Hear that several N.C.O.’s. of the Battalion are in for commissions, Edwards and Batt of the Signallers being among the number.

**March 11th—**Get the news of the bad cutting up received by the 4th Division. It seems a big raid was planned on the Division front. Gas was first liberated in large quantities but at the crucial moment the wind dropped, leaving the gas hanging over No Man’s Land. Instead of the raid being called off, the troops were ordered over the top into the poisonous fumes, and also into heavy enemy fire. A bad business altogether, for the German trenches were never reached and the 4th Division is said to have had eight hundred men killed and wounded. Three Colonels reported to be among the killed.

**March 13th—**Get the good news that Bagdad has fallen, and we all hope its fall will shorten the war. It is just a month since we came to Bruay, but signs are not wanting that we move soon. There are indications of a big offensive and the rumour is going the rounds that the Canadian Corps is to take Vimy Ridge — no easy task seeing that seventy thousand French soldiers are reported to have lost their lives in a futile but gallant attempt to get the Ridge last year. Their bones and tattered uniforms are still scattered on the slopes leading to the Ridge and, when the opportunity presents itself, are interred by our working parties.

The coming offensive is viewed with equanimity by the average man of the line. As likely as not he is a fatalist, be he unlettered lumberjack or university graduate, and believes that everything is mapped out by some great unknown power—and in any case it won’t matter a hundred years from now. Hamlet may say, “There’s a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will,” but a Forty- niner is just as much a philosopher when he says, in less poetic language, “I’ll get it if I’m going to get it.” It all depends whether a bullet comes along with his number on it. This reminds one of the “D” Coy. man who is said to have picked up the nose cap of a shell, in the Ypres Salient last summer, and found his regimental number on it! He’s convinced now that he’s jake for the duration.

**March 15th —** We get inoculated in the morning. The last injection we got was at Berthen about a year ago, so no doubt this one was due. This inoculation must have a lot to do with the good health of the troops—how otherwise could an army, often living under unsanitary and filthy conditions, be free from disease.

**March 18th —** Paris edition of the “Daily Mail” contains the bad news of the revolution in Russia. If Russia drops out it is very evident that the war will have to be fought out and decided on the Western Front. In the evening a big crowd turn out to witness a hundred-yard sprint, in one of the streets of the town, between the two fastest runners in the battalion — Earle Hay and a C coy. draft man. A very close race, almost a tie in fact, for the C coy. man, only wins by a few inches.

**March 19th —** Yesterday’s bad news is counteracted to-day by the fall of Bapaume and also word of a big French advance on an eighty- mile front. We get all packed up and ready to move back to the line, but at 10:00 a.m. a runner comes along with a message cancelling the move. We are not sorry, for it is a wild day and the rain is pelting down. Tom James and Billy Hipwell set out on Saddle-horses to bring back the billeting party, which started out early this morning.

**March 23rd—**We leave Bruay at last, after a six weeks stay which we will always associate with pleasant memories. An early reveille, for we are on the road by 8:00 a.m. “C” Coy. Saddle-horse, Doc by name, is not required by any officer so I grab it myself and get a ride to Villers-Au-Bois, which we reach about noon. Mud everywhere but we of the Transport strike it lucky for we get a barn for the horses and a bunkhouse for ourselves. Battalion is camped about three miles from our lines.

**March 28th —** Cold wintry weather continues. George Adkins and I ride over to Barlin with harness to be repaired. Have to face a heavy snowstorm all the way there. Battalion remains on working parties and it is rumoured that they do not go into the line for some time. Troops are numerous in this area and our brigade apparently is only holding a battalion front. Sorry to hear of the death of Lt. A. A. Murray in the R. F. C.

**March 29th —** Rains all day long. Mud everywhere is ankle deep. But our bunkhouse is warm and full of good fellows, and there is never a dull moment in it. Get the unexpected but good news that we return to Bruay to-morrow.

**March 31st —** Pull out from camp at 10:00 a.m. and we are not sorry to leave this sea of mud behind us. Reach Bruay at 3:00 p.m. Civilians give us a great welcome and are evidently as glad to see us as we are them. We go into our old billets and find an excited Suzanne wanting us to come in and have coffee before we have had time to unsaddle the horses. The ....th. Battn., who have been in Bruay during our absence have left their usual dirty billets behind them. The ....th is one of those hoodoo outfits, fortunately rare in the Canadian Corps, which never seems to do anything right, either behind the line or in it.

**April 1st —** Thoroughly enjoyed this second sojourn in Bruay. Pat and I go over to the private house previously mentioned, occupied by Belgium refugees, and once more revel in the luxury of a good bath. Get word that the Battalion returns up the line to-morrow. George MacLeod comes back to the Battalion and takes, over “B” Coy.

**April 5th —** The Battalion moves back to Villers- Au-Bois by way of Houdain. Transport Lines in the open at Gouay Servins. Hear the good news that the U. S. A. has declared war on Germany. The average Canadian soldier has never had any doubt as to the ultimate issue of the war, but he feels that America’s entry will bring about the defeat of Germany all the sooner.

**April 8th —** Easter Sunday and a grand day, and how good the warm sunshine feels after the recent bitter weather. Take the horses out and give them a good run over the open ground. Hear that the Battalion is to go over the top to-morrow for the great assault on the Ridge. See an enemy plane swoop down on one of our observation balloons and shoot inflammatory bullets into it — never seen these inflammatory bullets used before. The balloon drops in flames but not before the two occupants make their getaway in parachutes.

**April 9th —** Tom James, who is on picket duty, comes into the tent at 5:30 a.m. and wakes me up, telling me there is a sight outside worth looking at Go out with him and see that the distant Ridge, north and south as far as the eye can see, is a great mass of flame. Shells are exploding so rapidly that distinct explosions cannot be heard—there is nothing but a great dull roar. Fritz will be needing his deep dug- outs on the Ridge all right with all this hell let loose on him. An awe- inspiring and never-to-be-forgotten sight. It is just past zero hour now, and the fellows are going over the top, with the barrage creeping ahead of them. We stand there in silence for well we know that at this very moment many a gay and gallant spirit is leaving its mortal frame.

Later in the day we are cheered by rumours of big success all along the front. Objectives everywhere seem to have been gained and large numbers of prisoners secured. Our casualties reported light — lighter than expected.

**April 10th —** Rumours of yesterday confirmed. The great Ridge regarded as well-nigh impregnable, was captured yesterday by the four Canadian Divisions. Casualties much below expectations con- sidering the nature of the objectives gained. Those of the 49th are reported to number about fifty dead and wounded. Hundreds of German prisoners, captured yesterday, pass by our camp, ’they are caked over with mud and look thoroughly hungry, shaken and miserable — poor devils, they’ve had a taste of what we had to endure in the June scrap in the Salient last year. In the afternoon James, Hipwell and I get orders to go over to the Divisional Pack Train with officers’ saddle-horses — they are to be used as pack animals. Big batches of German prisoners still coming down from the line. Find the Divisional Pack Train camped in the open near the Neuville St. Vaast Road. Snowing hard and no shelter for man or beast. Have a supper of bully beef and biscuits eaten from numbed fingers. They lay down on the snow and shiver. So cold and miserable that sleep is out of the question. We would just about sell our souls now for a rum ration but none is available.

**April 11th —** On getting up from our beds in the snow we find that our wet boots have frozen stiff during the night, and we have a sweet time getting our feet into them. A north wind and a bitterly cold morning. The Pack Train cook has managed to get a dixie boiling, though he has no field kitchen and never did hot tea go down so well. James, Hippy and I are told that the saddlehorses will not be required for the present and we return to the comparative comfort of our Transport Lines, where we are under canvas. Get a copy of the continental “Daily Mail” and experience a big thrill on reading the headline “Canadians Storm Vimy”. It is regarded as the most smashing victory that the Allies have had on the Western Front.

**April 12th —** Six inches of snow outside our tents in the morning. The picket has not been on the job for three horses have been swiped during the night. Two are later discovered hitched to an artillery limber pulling out for another part of the district. The driver, as he hands them over, puts up the yarn that he found them roaming around loose.

**April 14th —** Tom, Hippy (Hipwell) and I return to the Divisional Pack Train, taking saddlehorses with us. Find the camp has been moved considerably nearer the line. No sooner get settled down for the night when the camp gets shelled. Get orders to move to a more sheltered spot half a mile distant. General confusion — a sweet job trying to load up frightened horses and mules on a dark, muddy night.

**April 15th—**Divisional Pack Train consists of 108 men and the same number of horses and mules, there being nine men and nine pack animals from each of the twelve battalions in the Division. We are under an officer and an acting sergeant-major, the former of the R.C.R.’s and the latter a corporal of the 42nd. A fine crowd, quite a number of whom are old packers — many a diamond hitch they have tied on Albertan and B. C. trails. There is little or no art in loading an army pack-saddle, with its hooks to hang things on, but these old- timers recognize it as a first rate pack-saddle and say they would like to use it some day on Canadian trails.

**April 16th —** Wake up feeling chilled to the bone, or we are still camped out in the open without cover of any kind. Manage to rustle a canvas cover and we erect a bivie in the afternoon. In the evening a party of about a dozen of us pack up rations to the line for the 43rd. Battn. A tough trip for it rains hard and we get wet through. Both horses and ourselves played out struggling through the mud. One of the horses, belonging to a 58th Battn. packers, slips down into a shell- hole and gets bogged in the mud. Efforts to drag it out prove un- availing and it has to be shot. On our return find that our bivie has failed to turn water and our blankets are wet through. Some life all right. The very worst sort of civie life will seem sweet after this.

**April 18th —** Cold wet weather continues. It is telling on the horses and mules, — poor brutes. After being under shelter all winter they now find themselves exposed to bitter weather conditions. Three have already died and several are in a weakened condition and not fit for work. Tom and Hippy go to Houdain with a party for remounts.

**April 20th —** Afine day at last, and we are glad to be able to spread our blankets out in sunshine and get them dried out. Pack up ammunition at night for the 8th Brigade. The road is being shelled heavily and we pass much smashed up transport, many dead horses and three dead drivers. Ground all chewed up after we leave the road and going is difficult. Get hung up in wire on several occasions. Take ammunition almost up to the front line. On our return take chances as we race past an ammunition dump which has been exploded by a Ger- man shell. One of our party, a C.M.R., gets an arm broken by an empty shell case.

**April 23rd—**Fine weather continues. Tom, Hippy and I build a sandbag wall for our bivie, thus raising the roof and giving us more comfort and room. Feel quite reconciled to this packer’s life as long as the weather remains anything like decent. Little for us to do during the day except look after one horse each and perhaps make a trip to the dump for our own rations. We make trips up the line about three nights out of four, in small parties, with rations, water, ammunition, etc.

**April 25th —** Pack up rations at night for the 49th Battn. Charlie Matheson in charge of our party. Not as much traffic as usual and we get held up very little. Go through Petit Vimy and as far as the railway embankment, where we dump the rations. A quiet and interesting trip, for everywhere there are signs of recent enemy occupation, German rifles, steel helmets, equipment, etc. are to be seen everywhere, but they are ignored. The souvenir craze has died a natural death—the only souvenir a fellow wants to take back to Canada is a whole hide. Sorry to hear, while talking to fellows of the Battalion to whom we turned over the rations that Lt. Williams has been killed and Major Weaver and the Doctor wounded.

**April 27th —** It seems about a month of Sundays since we had a bath, and we are just about crawling. Determine to get some temporary relief so we make a fire and boil our underclothes in a pail. Dry them out afterwards in the warm sun. The clothing is little cleaner than it was but the lice at least are dead. Pack up wire screenings at night for the artillery. These screenings, used to camouflage the guns, constitute awkward loads. Some of the mules lash out and raise hell generally, but we get our loads all right to the gun-pits which are only about a couple of hundred yards behind the front line. Whiz-bangs explode unpleasantly close as we unload. On our return Petit Vimy is being shelled and we ride through it as hard as our horses and mules can travel. A pack-saddle is a rough sort of a seat but most of us have rigged up improvised stirrups, which makes riding easier, though many of the stirrups are nothing more than hay wire loops, a veritable death trap if a man was thrown and dragged.

**April 29th —** Pack up rations for the 52nd. On our return the Ridge is being shelled heavily. As we race along a 43rd man in the lead gets caught under the chin by a low-hanging telephone wire and is yanked out of his saddle but is thrown clear. We pick him up expecting to find him seriously hurt, but he is only badly shaken. We are able to catch his nag, and he climbs back into the saddle and away we go again.

**May 1st —** Camp gets shelled in the early hours of the morning. An eight-inch shell lands a few feet behind our bivie but proves a dud — feel very grateful to fate. The three of us, Tom, Hippy and I, on picket duty at night. Camp gets shelled again and there is a general “stand-to”. Move all horses and mules about a quarter of a mile until the shelling ceases. One of the R.C.R.’s gets killed; also two mules.

**May 3rd —** It is rather ridiculous for a dozen or more of us to go to the dump every morning with horses and mules to draw our rations, also hay and oats for the animals, when everything could easily be loaded into one G.S. wagon. Nowhere else but in the army would pack animals be used on a good road—and there is a good road to the ration dump. It is a different matter taking loads up the line at night for we go over rough, broken and muddy ground which wheeled transport could not very well negotiate. There is no chance of the Pack Train obtaining a G.S. wagon legitimately, so it is decided that one should be swiped. A Forty-niner, Charlie Matheson, volunteers for the job and a Forty-Twa, young Routledge, promptly says he is in on it too. The two of them set out with their horses but fail to return. Hear later that they were caught in the act of getting away with a wagon and harness, from an artillery outfit in a distant camp, and are now in the clink!

**May 6th, 1917 —** Life in the Divisional Pack Train continues much as usual, with trips up the line about three nights out of four. We are lying around on the grass in the afternoon when a German plane swoops down on a nearby observation balloon. Machine- guns on the ground blaze away at it but the pilot ignores them and shoots inflammatory bullets into the balloon from a distance of a few feet. The two observers drop out in parachutes but as there is little or no wind they drop almost vertically and they have a narrow escape as the blazing balloon falls past them, for it only seems to miss them by a few feet. The flames must have been close enough to scorch them. They are lucky fellows if they have still got whole hides — what with the German machine-gun, our own machine-guns and the flaming balloon. We are unanimous that a job on terra firma, no matter how dirty and lousy, beats anything airman makes a successful getaway though his machine must have been hit by bullets. We pack up rations at night for the 43rd. Take the “Y” route and go almost up to the front line. Enemy artillery searching everywhere and we are glad to get rid of. our loads. Lose no time riding back.

**May 8th —** A cold wet day, but the dust has been bad lately and we are glad to see it laid. Pack up rations at night for the 2nd C.M.R,’s. No guides sent to meet us and we get lost on the other side of the railway grade. Some of the horses and mules get caught in the barbed wire and we have a sweet time generally before we get rid of our loads. Tear gas, from shells hanging around some spots on our way back, but it is not bad enough for us to don our masks.

**May 12th —** Get an evening off and go over to the Battalion camp. Battalion is in the line, but a number have been detailed to stay behind this trip. A bunch of “old-timers” return from Blighty. These include the “Curly Wolf” (Perry Barron), Tommy Eves and “Coggie” (Cogswell).

**May 17th —** Am placed in charge of a party of eight packers taking up rations for the 7th Brigade. After we have unloaded rations we find there is no ride back for us, for we have to load up again with German anti-aircraft ammunition, captured when the Ridge was taken, and bring it back to our camp. It puts us guessing to what use this German ammunition is to be put, unless it fits some of our guns, which seems hardly likely. It is all contained in wicker cases and is easy and convenient to handle. A quiet evening and we run into no shelling. We are luckier than another party of packers up the line this evening. They have a rough time and one of them gets wounded. His horse gets killed and two other horses are wounded.

**May 19th —** Pack up rations for the 42nd. On our return, along the Lens-Arras Road, one of the fellows, an 8th Brigade man, gets thrown from his mule. His foot gets caught in the hay-wire stirrup and he gets dragged a quarter of a mile along the cobblestones before the crazy and frightened mule can be stopped. He is so badly injured that he dies shortly afterwards. Pack Train also loses another man to-night for a party returning from the Quarry Lines report that Corpl. Webb was killed by a shell.

**May 20th —** Party goes up to bury young Webb. Pack train gets a bunch of mules from the base to replace casualties among the horses. These mules are unbroken animals from the southern U.S.A. and include three particularly mean brutes. Smithy of the 43rd, a husky kid of seventeen, volunteers to break them in. He’s been raised on a ranch and is in his element with a bad mule. Am on party at night packing up rations for the 116th Battn. Witness a thrilling air battle at dusk, between two Fritz planes and two of our own, as we wend our way along the “Y” route. See tracer bullets used for the first time. One of the German machines brought down, and it falls to the ground like a wounded bird. When we first came to France we would have cheered such a sight but we don’t now, for we know that German plane contains a brave man and our respect for him outweighs any other feeling. Some heavy shelling along the front, but we are lucky enough to miss it. Another party, working for the Engineers, have a hot. time. Two of them get wounded, both good “blighties”. A mule gets killed and another wounded.

**May 24th —** Empire Day, and Divisional sports are held to celebrate the occasion. Feel lazy and do not attend them. Pack up rations at night for the 52nd Battn. and take them right up to the front line. Ride back along the Lens-Arras road with one of the C.M.R.’s. He is riding the mule which threw and dragged its rider to death a few nights ago and as we near the spot where the man was thrown he tells me he has got to look out, for the animal, since that night, always raises hell when it reaches the place. Sure enough, when we get to the spot, the frightened beast plunges around wildly, but its present rider has no difficulty in staying with it. Strange beasts mules — a horse would not act. like that night after night at the scene of an accident.

**May 27th —** Get issued with gas masks for the pack animals. At noon we are told to put them on the mules and horses. Some of the mules resist all efforts to get the respirators on their noses and a veritable pantomine ensues. O. C. comes along to assist but gets knocked over the tie-rope by one of the animals and lands on his backside; but he’s a good sport and manages to keep his dignity. Pack up sandbags at night for the Engineers. On our return journey we are congratulating ourselves on having had a quiet trip when, as we enter the sunken road above Petit Vimy, we are bombed by an aeroplane which seems to be only skimming the ground. Four bombs are dropped and the sunken road in an instant is filled with dust and smoke, but we escape casualties. Mules and horses, on an occasion such as this, need neither spur nor whip — we had left the sunken road behind us a quarter of a mile or more before they slackened speed.

**May 29th —** Spend evening writing letters in the Y.M.C.A. On leaving run into Big Jock Elder of the 43rd Battn., with whom I was on a Signalling course at Zupeane last summer. Since then he has won both the M.M. and the D.C.M. but, like many another he has declined promotion, considering himself happier as a private. Am on picket duty on the lines at night. A little black devil of a mule breaks loose and resists all efforts to catch it. For half an hour it runs amuck and succeeds in disturbing the entire camp. At length it returns quietly to its place in the lines, apparently satisfied it has created enough mischief for one night.

**May 31st —** Personnel of Divisional Pack Train is reduced; two men being sent back to each Battalion. Tom James and I return to our own Transport Lines. Good to be back with our own Battalion again, though the packers are a fine crowd.

**June 2nd —** Having a lazy time in the Transport Lines. Am detailed for nothing more exacting than keeping an eye on the horses as they are turned out to graze. In the evening the fellows rig up a horizontal bar and we get a good deal of sport and exercise out of it. An argument between George Young and Dave Irons gives us a lot of entertainment. As the argument progresses Dave’s Scotch accent gets broader and broader, and George Young at length refuses to continue without the services of an interpreter! Dave is in high spirits, and so is Swanson for they are off on leave to bonny Scotland to-morrow morning.

**June 3rd —** The first anniversary of the 49th’s blackest but most glorious day. Yes, it’s just a year since that fateful day in the Salient when four hundred men, the flower of the original 49th, were killed and wounded in that desperate struggle, against overwhelming odds, for a few feet of ground. Deeds of valour performed that day have infused an inextinguishable spirit into the Battalion. Regimental tradition is a hard thing to explain— perhaps it is built up by the spirits of the dead who are determined that the Regiment must not let down. One feels that Forty-Niners who have passed on have not died in vain and, though life was sweet to them, they have left it in the health and strength of youth Fritz must have been badly demoralized at the start and Husky relates how three prisoners, on being taken at one stage of the raid, were told to beat it down a road alone and tag on to the first bunch of prisoners they saw under escort. But the enemy apparently put up a good fight in some spots. Husky, as he describes activities of “A” Coy. that night in vivid language, tells of a little incident which illustrates the remarkable camaraderie existing between the 42nd Battn. and ourselves. It seems there was a certain amount of confusion while the raid was in process, several of the battalions finding difficulty in keeping to their correct fronts. On one occasion a party was observed looming up in the darkness, like a certain small outbuilding in a fog as the saying goes, and on being challenged they replied, “Forty-Second.” At once there was a general chorus of “Good Old Forty-Twas.” A little later another party was challenged. They replied, giving the name of their battalion — and not being the 42nd, they were promptly told to “Get to hell on your own front!”

**June 12th —** Turn the horses out to graze and spend a lazy afternoon keeping an eye on them. This spot they are pasturing on was the last camping ground of the 48th Battn. before it was broken up. In the centre of the ground there is a great mound of stones surmounted by a large cross bearing this inscription: “R.I.P. to commemorate the last resting place of the 48th Battalion, C.E.F. Raised by Patriotism Feb. 1915. Killed by Politics May 1917.” It is hard to know what justification there is for the bitterness of this epitaph, for it is obvious that all battalions raised in Canada could not remain units throughout the war, but we of the 49th know what a fine outfit the 48th was and what a name they would have made for themselves had they served in the line. Did we not see them on May Day evening last year, rushing up the communication trench, and armed only with picks and shovels, when they heard our line was being raided. And how disappointed those husky kilties were when they were told the scrap was all over — our trenches were a shambles but the raiders had been beaten back, leaving their leader, a gallant young officer, severely wounded in our hands.

**June 14th —** “Dad”Carman takes over the Transport Section. He lines us up and gives us a friendly talk, saying that “Dad” is a nickname that he is proud of and he hopes it will always stay with him. And stay it most certainly will. Divisional sports held in afternoon. 49th horseback wrestlers win two easy victories but got defeated by the 5th C.M.R.’s. Our tug-of-war team do well and look like winning the Divisional championship. In evening go over to an open-air concert given by a Labor battalion, an Imperial outfit, camped just below us. Hear a splendid rendering of Kipling’s “Put out your pipes and follow me.” A fine concert throughout — seems a pity that Canadian battalions do not go in for these open-air entertainments. Run into Jimmie Hensman at the concert. Sorry to hear that he had a brother killed lately in the 4th Division.

**June 17th —** Air supremacy see-saws up and down but we seem definitely to be top dog these days. A group of our machines, known as “The Dirty Seven,” can be seen every day heading for the German lines, and always flying in the same formation. They apparently have things their own way for day after day they return intact.

**June 23rd —** We are lying around the camp in the evening, watching some stunting by a three-decker plane, when, during a sharp loop, the entire wings are suddenly wrenched from the machine. The body of the plane comes hurtling through the air at tremendous speed, screaming like a shell, and lands, with a terrible crash, about a quarter of a mile from our Transport Lines. We run over to the spot, where a big crowd has already collected. The body of the pilot is a bloody mess and mangled beyond recognition yet, marvelous to relate, there are some signs of life — at least so the stretcher- bearers say as they lift the body into the ambulance. The nose of the plane is buried in the ground and the machine all twisted and smashed up.

**June 25th —** Fine warm weather conditions. About the best spell of weather we have had since coming to France. But it seems a month of Sundays since we had a bath and George Adkins and I go down to Mont St. Eloi in the afternoon to try our luck. A big crowd outside the baths but after a long wait, and a hard struggle in a mass of per- spiring humanity, we manage to get in. Feel well rewarded after a hot tub. Alberta Provincial election is soon to take place and George Harper is unanimously nominated as Soldiers’ Representative. Would like to see him elected for he is thoroughly fitted for the job and well he deserves the honour— but in what other army, except perhaps the Australian, would a private be nominated for Parliament?

**June 28th —** A hot sultry day. Spend a lazy afternoon keeping an eye on the horses as they graze. See a foolhardy act performed by one of our airmen who is stunting above us. He suddenly swoops down on the ruined monastery at St. Eloi and makes for the gap between the walls of the battered tower. There would not appear to be space enough for him to fly between them but he gets through all right. One would think an airman ought to have thrills enough battling Fritz without attempting crazy stunts on his own. A likely explanation is that it was the outcome of some messroom bet. At night the rain comes down in torrents. Our tents get flooded out, the small ditch outside being unable to take the water.

**June 29th —** Some heavy fighting last night along the front. In early morning a group of sixty prisoners pass by our camp. Casualties of 43rd Battn. reported to have been heavy, two platoons being buried in mine explosions.

**July 2nd —** Third Division takes over Fourth Division front. Our Transport moves camp a couple of miles. Our new camp is in a timbered valley with water handy. Battalion moves into the line. See another German plane brought down in evening.

**July 6th —** George Young (Sergeant) comes back from Paris leave. Says that Paris is full of Americans, a contingent of 40,000 having landed recently. A fine-looking lot and all eager to get into the fighting. In evening see one of our observation balloons brought down by an enemy plane of new design, which seems to fly more swiftly than anything we have yet seen. No machine of ours in sight to tackle the enemy plane. Violent discussion ensues as to the supremacy of the air, several of the fellows maintaining we have lost it.

**July 9th —** The Battalion comes out of the line. Quite a number of casualties during this trip — it is evident that this front is tougher than the one we have been holding. Sorry to hear that Ernie Evans is amongst the badly wounded. At night I go up the line with “Gibbie” and his team and limber, hauling wire and iron stakes for the Engineers. A good deal of shelling going on. On our return the Engineers want us to make another trip, but Gibbie stoutly refuses to do so, saying, it cannot be made before dawn breaks. He gains his point after a hard argument.

**July 12th —** We catch a glimpse of the King as he drives past our camp in the afternoon. Not expecting him to drive by our camp though we had heard he was in the vicinity. Hipwell comes back from pass, and he and I agree to swop jobs — he to come back to the Battalion Transport and I to go to the Division Pack Train. We secure the necessary permission.

**July 13th —** Back once more with the packers. Move into a bivie with Fitzell and “Waffles.” They tell me the Pack Train has been lucky of late for there has not been a casualty for the past two weeks. At night pack up rations for the 4th C.M. R’s. A long trip and a wet night. Get soaked through. On our return to camp much appreciate the hot coffee, which is served out gratis, at the nearby Church Army Institute.

**July 18th —** An evening off and I spend it at the Transport Lines. The Battalion has moved up to The Tunnel, where it is to be on working parties for eight days. Division rest then follows. See some remarkable shooting by enemy anti-aircraft gun. The shrapnel shells, directed at one of our observation balloons, get closer and closer, to the obvious discomfort of the two observers who at length jump out in parachutes. Balloon eventually is hit and falls to the ground. First balloon we have seen brought down by shell fire.

**July 22nd —** Packing up rations at night for the 43rd. One of our party, a -58th Battn. man, gets his arm broken by a shell splinter. Lucky devil, for it means six months in Blighty for him. Get back to the lines about mid-night but shortly after turning in the camp is shelled and we have to move the horses and mules about half a mile up the road until the shelling ceases.

**July 23rd —** Get the news that the 116th went “over the top” in great style early this morning. It seems that they met with considerable opposition, but they took over a hundred prisoners and are holding on to the ground they gained. Their first time “over the top” and no doubt they are feeling proud of their performance. The fighting was evidently severe for numerous ambulances, full both of our own and German wounded, pass our camp.

**July 26th —** The Division moves out to rest camp. Pack Train goes to Barlin. Camp situated in a good spot, with a Y.M.C.A. alongside of us. Hear a lecture there in the evening on “Fatalism”. The speaker, a Y.M.C.A. Captain, tells us that the longer he lives the more he is convinced that everything is mapped out by some great unknown power and it behooves us to believe, however much our faith may be taxed, that all is for the best. He speaks well, and cheerfully, and leaves an impression with us, particularly as he is a man who has evidently seen service in the front line for, he has got an M.C.

**July 28th —** Receive a parcel, with a kindly note, from a girl in Maryland, U.S.A., whom I have never heard of in my life. Feel somewhat mystified that she should be sending parcels to an unknown Canadian soldier when her own country is in the war. Heavy thunderstorm in the afternoon and the water invades the tents, A fine evening and the fellows spend it wrestling and boxing. “Dusty” of the Princess Pats provides most of the comedy. Nothing but the best of sportsmanship shown, which speaks well for the Pack Train, consisting as it does of men from twelve different battalions — and a certain amount of rivalry is inevitable between units.

**July 31st —** Maffret returns from leave in Blighty, after having taken only thirteen extra days, but nothing was done about it when he reported at the O.R. Every Forty-Niner takes an extra day or two but it is felt that “Maff”, with his thirteen extra days, has been overdoing it, to put it mildly.

**August 6th —** A bunch of us go to the local miners’ bathhouse. A palatial building and we get the best bath we’ve had for many a day. Understand now why the miners are so clean looking when returning from their work. A couple of women workers around the baths are quite unperturbed by our state of nature. In the evening attend concert in the Y.M.C.A. Best item some Dickens impersonations by an officer. What a novel that great student of human nature would have written had he lived these days and served in the trenches.

**August 12th —** Get a pass and go over to the Battalion and register my vote for George Harper in the Alberta elections. Sorry to hear that Ernie Evans died in hospital recently from wounds received in the line. It is sad to see the old originals, of who Ernie was one, getting fewer all the time. Visit the Transport Lines and have a long gossip with Tony Peterson who is just back from Blighty leave.

**August 15th —** Go to Bruay on ration party in morning. Three shells drop in the town, to the great alarm of the civilians, but there are no casualties. Get news that an offensive last night, carried out during heavy rain, was a success. But our casualties must have been severe for our wounded are numerous in the long string of ambulances which pass the camp. In the evening a dejected looking lot of five hundred prisoners pass by our camp. Many are mere boys and in great contrast to the fine looking prisoners captured on the Somme a year ago.

**August 17th —** Activity up the line continues and there is a great deal of traffic on the road alongside our camp. Two hundred and fifty more unhappy looking prisoners pass by. There is a marked contrast in the appearance of our troops going up the line and those coming out, the former looking very spick and span and tidy, while the latter are bedraggled, with their uniforms covered with chalk dirt and several days growth of hair on their faces. Henderson of the 42nd gets his leg broken by a kick from his mule — a fine blightie for him. A good job though that he has witness to prove it was an accident, for the powers-that-be are quite capable to trying to make out that he aggravated the animal into lashing out and giving him a blighty. If a fellow cuts his hand opening a tin of Maconichy the hurt is regarded as a self-inflicted wound until proved otherwise.

**August 19th —** Hear that the Pack Train is to move back into the line within the next day or two. The 7th Brigade, moving up the line, spends the night in Barlin. Go down and spend the evening with the Battalion signallers. Three of them just back from Paris leave. Two of them mere boys who had known nothing of life before joining the army, and they are still excited over their Paris experiences. Can one blame them for attempting to taste life to the full, e’en from a chance pick-up on the streets, when they know full well that their lives may be snuffed out the next time they go up the line. There’s many a young soldier who is in- continent for the first time while on leave from the line, and just because he knows the next trip into the trenches may be his last.

August 23rd
Divisional Pack Train camped at Le Brebis, having moved up from Barlin yesterday. We set up bivies and make ourselves as comfortable as possible. The 7th Brigade is now in the line, and we pack up rations at night for the R.C.R’s. A quiet trip, and we get back in good time. Very sorry to hear of the death of Major Boyle. The Battalion can ill afford to lose such a rugged soldier. He was a giant in more than just physique, and he brought out the very best in the men fighting under him.

August 25th
We move the Pack Lines back to Petit Sains. Take up rations at night for the Princess Pats. A long trip, almost up to the front line. Rains all night, and we get wet through. Find our tents and our bivies flooded out on our return. Several shells drop in the town at night.

August 28th
A wild, wet night, and tents and bivies get blown down and badly ripped. Leave the camp deserted and get billets in a big barn. Up the line at night, packing up sandbags for the Engineers. A lively night. One of the Princess Pats gets hit, also three of the pack animals. An unhealthy spot, and we lose no time getting away after dumping our loads.

August 30th
Not warned for any trip up the line, and Hansford and I go to a concert by the 28th Battn. Some good talent and a thoroughly enjoyable show. On our return to the camp, we get detailed to go up the line, hauling up gas cylinders for the Engineers. A lively night and a double trip. Don’t get back to camp until 3:00 a.m.

August 31st
Pack up rations and water for the 49th. The night is quiet until we leave Battalion headquarters. Ten of us packers are in our party, and with us are “Dad” Carman and Capt. Travers, these two officers always making a point of seeing the rations delivered to their destination. It is bright moonlight, and we are evidently spotted as we stop at the end of the road and start to unload. Whiz-bangs land in amongst us, and I see the man in front of me, Bud Wiser, crumple up and fall to the ground. His mule also drops. Another packer, “Davy,” is wounded. The shelling continues, and it is as much as we can do to hang on to the terrified animals, let alone unload them. I get a glimpse of Capt. Travers making herculean efforts to control a crazed mule, and then I get knocked down from the concussion of a shell which seems to explode just the other side of my mule. Lie there for a while, stunned and deafened by the explosion, and only dimly conscious of what is happening.

The shelling at length stops, and I pick myself up. Must have been lying there some time, for when I get to my feet, there is no sign of anyone around. Three packers—Burt, Bud Wiser, and a 116th man—are stretched out dead, and three mules are also dead. One of the dead mules was my own; his belly is ripped up, and the pack-saddle has a great gash in it.

As I start back, I come across a wounded mule about a hundred yards down the road. He is able to walk, and I lead him along with me. Further down the road, I catch up with three packers and four mules, two of which are wounded. We return to camp slowly, feeling miserable and shaken at the loss of our comrades.

September 1st
Still feeling considerably shaken and can hear nothing in my left ear. Parade sick and am sent up to the hospital. Grub good, plenty of literature to read, and spring beds to sleep on. Slip down to the Transport lines at night and see the fellows. Sorry to hear that Dad Carman was badly wounded last night. He is reported to be doing well in hospital, though it is feared he will lose a leg.

General concern is felt for his well-being, for there is no more popular officer in the 49th than Dad Carman. Did ever quartermaster have the interests of his men more at heart than had Dad Carman during the two years or more when he was “D” company’s Q.M.? He is going to be sadly missed by the Transport Section, for though he only took over last June, he had already endeared himself to all those serving under him. Never was the nickname “Dad” more appropriate.

September 2nd
No rigid rules about remaining in hospital, and I slip out in the afternoon and visit the Packers. Petit Sains is being shelled on my return to hospital. See half a house destroyed by a shell. Hear later that the dead body of a child, a little girl, was recovered from the ruins. Yet there are those who talk and write of the glory of war. Wonder if they would still do so after seeing the mutilated body of that child.

September 3rd
Get detailed for Corps Rest Station at Fresnicourt. Taken down there by ambulance in the afternoon. Bath and a change of clothes. Hospital ideally situated in the grounds of an old chateau, and surely every hospital should aim at being in such a place—in beautiful surroundings and close to nature. Under such conditions, the battle is half won at the start for those sick in mind and body. Accommodation and grub good. Weather grand.

September 5th
Whoever is in charge of this Rest Camp knows his job. We are left alone, and the entire day is our own apart from the medical inspection in the morning. As we lie around in the grass, we see a big German plane brought down by one of our small air scouts. It is entirely out of control as it crashes to the ground. Our air scout, after his success, loops the loop a couple of times and cuts other delighted capers—perhaps his first bag.

In the evening, attend a lecture in the Y.M.C.A. given by a French interpreter. He is no “interrupter,” a term sometimes facetiously applied to his profession, for he has a perfect command of English. He gives us a most interesting lecture on French history, though his version of various events differs mightily from that which was taught to us at school. To hear him talk, one would almost think his countrymen won the Battle of Agincourt! But he is a good-natured and humorous fellow and gives no offence to his audience. A thoroughly entertaining evening, in fact.

September 6th
See an ear specialist in the morning. Spend the day lazily, basking in the sun and reading in the chateau grounds. In the evening, go over and view the old castle at Fresnicourt. A good deal of the castle, which is surrounded by a fine moat, remains intact.

What tales those old walls could tell if they could only speak—of war and romance, of love and hate, of happiness and misery throughout the centuries. The ancient building, to which there clings the spirit of the past, is being gazed at with mixed feelings by Canadian soldiers—mixed feelings in which reverence largely predominates, for many of them had never seen a building more than fifty years old before they joined the army.

September 8th
Having a very lazy time of it. An artilleryman in the bed next to me rejoins his unit, and his bed is taken by a wireless and I.T. man. Very interesting listening to him describing how they listen in to what is passing over the German wires. Spend the evening on the hilltop above Fresnicourt with a copy of Browning’s poems. A grand sunset—almost as gorgeous as anything one sees on the prairies.

September 10th
A big mail from England arrives, including a letter from Bill English of the O.R. In the afternoon, I take a hike over to Mount St. Eloi where the Battalion is camped. It’s good to see the fellows once more and get all the latest news.

September 12th
A Chinese outfit is camped not far away, and a number of them come over in the evening with a handcart on which to load some rolls of blankets for washing. They load these rolls up in a big pile on the cart, but the load topples down as soon as they start moving.

There is apparently no one in charge and no one with any idea of how to build up a load, but they all jabber away at the same time, thinking they know what should be done. Again and again, the load topples over, each upset greeted by shrieks of laughter from the Chinks. It may not sound particularly funny on paper, but it was a most uproarious comedy to watch, and we laughed until our sides ached.

At length, some of the fellows, tired of laughing, built up the load properly for the Chinks, and they trotted off gaily, still chattering away like monkeys.

September 15th
Am marked for duty and leave the hospital. Upon returning to the Pack Train, I am told to report to the Battalion Transport. Meet Botel down there; he has just returned from Blighty leave and gives a graphic account of an air raid on London. He was able to render first aid to a couple of casualties.

He tells me that Macdonald, Cutres, and McKenzie of the Signalling Section have all been recommended for commissions in the Royal Flying Corps. They should all make good pilots.

September 17th
Ride up the line at night as an orderly to Capt. Travers. The night is very quiet, with not even a shell dropping around Vimy Station—a very different state of affairs to that prevailing two or three months ago on this front. The 49th front is now on the Division’s extreme right.

September 19th
With Rowdon away on leave, I am detailed to take his team for the day. Haul water in the afternoon. An enemy aeroplane gets the better of one of our machines and pursues it to the ground, keeping at its tail the whole way and peppering it with his machine gun.

He flies over our camp at a height of only about two hundred feet—so low, in fact, that his features can be plainly seen. The German bullets kick up a dust in our camp, and everybody scatters, some for shelter and others, the bolder spirits, to grab rifles with which they emerge and blaze away at the plane, which seems such a big target flying so low.

Feel uncomfortably conspicuous myself perched on a horse. Fritz makes his getaway, though his machine can hardly have escaped being hit by rifle fire. Our plane lands just behind the Transport Lines. We go over to the spot and find the machine is riddled with bullets. The observer has been shot through the leg, but the pilot is uninjured.

September 20th
Jimmie McGillivray drops by the Transport Lines and mentions that Bill Frame and he have been recommended for the M.M. Surely no two men ever deserved the decoration better. Three teams go up the line at night working for the Engineers. I am detailed to go along as brakesman on the trestle wagon. A quiet evening—no shelling.

September 22nd
Results of the Alberta Provincial election are announced. To our disappointment, George Harper has been beaten by about nine hundred votes. Bob Pearson and a nurse are the two successful candidates. But George made a good showing, polling more than three thousand votes.

An American soldier visits the camp at night, the first we’ve seen. He is a quiet, well-spoken fellow and looks smart in his uniform, but the gaiters he is wearing do not appear very practical for trench use.

September 24th
Troops in the vicinity can be seen going over the tapes every day, and everything points to an early offensive on this front. A Chinese labour battalion moves into the district and camps alongside us. They are tall, lanky fellows from northern China, and many of them look quite villainous.

September 25th
Get detailed for horse clipping at the Mobile. Looks as though we are in for a lengthy job, for all the horses in the Division—about 1,200 in number—are to be clipped. Six machines and twelve men are on the job. Only one mean horse handled during the day; he has to be thrown before he can be clipped.

September 28th
Horse clipping at the Mobile continues. More than twenty men, from various battalions, are working there now, and we make good headway. Pause in our work to watch a German plane shoot down a nearby observation balloon. Three of our planes are on the job and get after him, but he decides to try and bag another balloon before making his getaway.

He gets a second balloon all right, but our planes are now right on his tail, and they shoot him down before he can get back to his own lines. We hear afterward that the two observers from the second balloon, after leaping to safety in their parachutes, went over to the captured German pilot and shook hands with him. Pity all the fighting could not be conducted on such chivalrous lines.

September 30th
Hear of the good work done by the Forty-Twa’s up the line last night. They ambushed and cleaned up an enemy patrol in No Man’s Land, not one man escaping. As no one had gotten back to tell the tale, the Forty-Twa’s decided that it was likely a second party would be dispatched to seek out party number one.

So they stayed their ground and were rewarded, after a long wait, when a second German patrol loomed up in the dark. They cleaned up this party too and returned to our trenches without suffering a single casualty. Great work, for seven prisoners were secured and more than that number of dead left in No Man’s Land.

October 2nd
Clipping at the Mobile continues. A mean brute of a horse bites “Frenchie” of the 52nd on the thigh, though that’s not The word that appears in this diary. The torrent of invective he lets loose, as he dances around, gives us a great laugh. Wonder just why the misfortunes of another should be a subject of merriment, but no doubt Eve laughed, in the first place, when Adam met with some misfortune.

In the evening, watch about half a dozen of our airmen performing all kinds of stunts. They seem as though they are trying to outdo each other, and it is as good as a circus seeing them looping the loop, doing the corkscrew drive, and other daredevil stunts.

October 4th
At noon, we get the totally unexpected news that the Division, and the whole Canadian Corps in fact, is to move out of the line. All the more surprising since the fellows have been going over the tapes for some time past and were expecting a big offensive on this front. Wild rumours everywhere.

October 5th
Get an early start. March to Chelers by way of Acq. Chelers is a typical French village. Billeted in a big barn. A cold, wet evening, but we rustle wood and make a good fire. After supper, we sit around the fire yarning and are quite a happy crowd. After all, what more can a fellow want than warmth, a belly more or less filled, and good company?

October 9th
This is the second anniversary of the landing of the 49th in France, and a good excuse for the Battalion to celebrate—and celebrate it does in no mean fashion. Tony Peterson, Mike Dempsey, and I, survivors of the party who joined up at Lake Wabamun, have a little celebration of our own in a nearby estaminet.

We get George Harper to join us, and we have a happy time together. A rowdy time in camp at night. A “C” Coy. man picks a quarrel with Mike Dempsey and tells him it is lucky he’s got stripes to protect him.

October 9th (continued)
Mike thereupon takes off his tunic and floors the fellow. Major Weaver, just returned from Blighty, gets a great reception—Pat Cunningham, somewhat under the influence of the evening’s celebration, grabbing him by the hand and saying, “You’re a Curly Wolf, you’re a Fluffy Cow!”

October 10th
Am detailed to help George Harper with the issue of hay and oats. Strong rumours to the effect that the Canadians are going to Passchendaele. Charlie Walker and Edwards return to the Battalion with commissions. Take a walk over to Tinques in the evening with George Adkins and get a feed of eggs and chips.

October 16th
Entrain at Savy. Detailed to travel with a carload of horses (*huit chevaux*). An interesting trip. Many African and Asiatic natives in strange garb are at work on the grade. Disentrain at Caestre.

It is just two years ago since we were here, and memories go back—for it seems a long time ago—to those days when we were green troops in a strange country. We that are left feel like seasoned troops now. It is nearly midnight before the train is unloaded, and we then set out on a long march. A halt is called at length, and we are billeted in a great barn with a thatched roof. Horses are tied out in the open.

October 18th
Our billets are about two miles from Hazebroucke, which is full of Imperials, Australians, and Americans. See a trainload of tanks going up towards the line. Much traffic on the road by our camp, and everything points to further heavy fighting Ypres way.

German aeroplanes are over our camp at night, with our searchlights playing on them. No bombs are dropped in our vicinity.

October 23rd
The Battalion takes the train for St. Jean. Transport goes by road, via Reninghelst. Our lines are near the old Belgium Chateau. Hardly anything is left standing in Ypres now—it must have been badly battered since we left it over a year ago. German planes are over our lines all the time. Fritz is undoubtedly boss in the air on this front.

October 24th
A fine day, and George Harper and I fix up a good bivie. Anzacs are to be seen everywhere. Many have been in the line, and they tell us this is the toughest front they have ever been on—no trenches to speak of, everything being one great sea of mud. Enemy planes are active again today. The Battalion is bombed, with three men killed and a dozen wounded.

October 26th
Jimmy Petersen comes back from leave and joins George Harper and me in the bivie. It’s a wet, miserable day, but we rustle up enough dead ashes and coke to get a fire going in an improvised brazier. Make some tea and toast at night, and as we sit around the glowing brazier, George Harper rubs his hands, beams through his spectacles, and says, “I call this real comfort.”

Remarkable chap is George. Although fifty-six years of age, he still sticks it out as well as any fellow in his twenties. Hear that the 8th and 9th Brigades took their objectives yesterday and captured some prisoners. Their losses were heavy, however.

October 27th
I go and visit my brother’s grave near the old Railway Dugout. The vicinity has been shelled heavily, but my brother’s grave is intact, though the wooden cross has been riddled with shrapnel. German bombing planes are active at night. They come over every night and are getting on the fellows’ nerves.

October 28th
The Battalion moves up into the line. Colonel Palmer is in charge, with George Macleod as second in command. A forty-eight-hour trip. It is reported that they have tough objectives to take. More heavy bombing by Fritz at night.

October 29th
A fine day for a change. The Battalion is to go over the top tomorrow. Get the news that Capt. Travers was killed last night while taking the rations up the line. Wonder if there ever existed a more conscientious quartermaster than Capt. Travers. His job did not necessitate him facing the shelling night after night, but he did so nevertheless, for wherever the rations went, he went also.

October 30th
In the early morning, we hear that all is going well. But about noon, we get the disastrous news! The Battalion has been all but wiped out in a desperate effort to gain objectives. Seven officers are reported killed and thirteen wounded.

As black a day for the 49th as the 3rd of June last year. The jubilation we felt when the first rumours reached us this morning is now turned to depression, and faces everywhere are sad and lifeless.

October 31st
Hear some details of the fighting yesterday. Our artillery preparations were a long way short of that which backed the fellows at Vimy, and the enemy pillboxes were almost undamaged.

October 31st (continued)
Heavy machine-gun fire from these pillboxes is responsible for most of our casualties. Mud, from all accounts, is the worst that has been encountered on any front—so thick and heavy that wounded and exhausted men sank in it and were drowned. Makes one wonder why such a quagmire should be selected for an offensive.

Give the Canadian Corps a decent show with artillery and solid ground to fight on, and they’ll smash through the enemy line anywhere on the Western Front. But no matter how stout the heart may be, the flesh cannot survive, hour after hour, against a sea of mud.

The Battalion gets relieved and comes out of the line not much more than a hundred strong. Only about a dozen men are left in “B” Coy. All the old timers in “A,” my old company, seem to have been either killed or wounded. The “A” Coy. dead include those two fine young officers, Stone and Rusconi, who were with the Battalion so long as privates.

German bombing planes are over the camp again at night, and there are heavy casualties in the vicinity.

November 1st
George Harper, Mose Williams, and Dorway get their passes for Rome leave. They are the first in the Battalion to get Italian leave. There would appear to be some method in sending British soldiers there on leave, for the morale of the country must be at a low ebb, judging by the recent serious reverses on their Austrian front.

A dark, cloudy night, and we are not visited by enemy bombers. The Battalion is to move tomorrow, and everyone will be glad to get away from these night air raids.

November 2nd
Move back to billets near Watau. The Battalion is transported by busses. Good barn for the Transport Section, but the horse lines are out in the open. Am placed in charge of the hay and oats during the absence of George Harper. An easy enough job, though it is not an easy matter to satisfy the drivers with the meagre rations received.

Have to sleep with the feed, or it would be swiped, for the drivers worry about their horses going hungry—but the animals keep in good shape, nevertheless. Hear that the Battalion went into the line on the 28th, 570 strong. Casualties numbered 425, roughly seventy-five percent. This is the heaviest blow the Battalion has suffered since landing in France. Fellows are feeling depressed and a little bitter over the whole wretched business. They are asking why an offensive should be made on the worst part of the Western Front at the worst time of the year.

November 4th
Get paid in the afternoon, and fellows strive to forget the horrors of Passchendaele in the local estaminets. A draft of a hundred men reaches the Battalion. Some old-timers are included in this draft, with Gleave and Gale of No. 2 Platoon among them. A fine evening, and Willie Palmer and I take a walk down to Watau.

November 6th
One of our planes tries to make a landing by our camp. It catches on a telegraph wire and turns a complete somersault. The plane is badly wrecked, but the pilot and observer are unhurt. They climb out of the wreckage and light cigarettes. The pilot then remarks, with affected accent and a sheepish grin, that he’ll probably get hell for smashing up a new bus.

He is a veritable Piccadilly Johnny and, had the war not come along, he would probably be hanging around the stage door of a West End theatre—whereas now he is a fearless pilot on the Western Front.

In the afternoon, there is a baseball (softball) match between officers and sergeants. The fellows turn out in force to watch it. Some of the nicknames hurled at the players are hardly of a complimentary nature, nor are some of the remarks, but it is all good-natured fun, and a hilarious time is had by all.

But possibly it is all a little bit forced—though unconsciously so—a reaction to the misery, suffering, and heartache of Passchendaele a week ago.

November 7th, 1917
Hear the good news, at our billets near Watau, that Passchendaele Ridge has been captured by the 1st Division. Details are lacking, but it can be assumed that their losses must have been severe in that morass of blood and mud.

November 9th
Am told that I proceed on leave tomorrow. The prospect of two weeks' leave in Blighty, living as a human being ought to live, is truly something to look forward to.

November 10th
A group of us leave billets at 6:00 a.m. and travel by bus from Watau to Poperinghe. A cold, miserable morning. Get a welcome meal of eggs and chips at Pop. A different Poperinghe it is now to that which the bold Mercutio had in mind when, in *Romeo and Juliet*, he made that most outrageous play on the town’s name—perhaps the bawdiest line in all Shakespeare’s plays.

Entrained at 11:00 a.m., and get to Boulogne about 8:00 p.m. March up the big hill to the camp on the summit. It is a soul-killing hill to anyone marching with full kit and equipment, as many a soldier knows on landing in France, but we are traveling light and are on our way to Blighty, so the steep hill means little to us. Get a good supper at the Expeditionary Force Canteen.

November 11th
Leave camp at 6:00 a.m. The boat sails a couple of hours later. It takes us an hour and a half to cross the Channel. A rough crossing, and a number of us are sick. Make good time traveling up to the Big Smoke. Great to be back in London again.

The usual crowd is at Victoria Station. Church and welfare representatives are there in force, trying to get young soldiers to ignore the “Hello Canada” greeting of the ladies of easy virtue. Go round to the Maple Leaf Club and get a bath and a good clean-up.

November 12th
Take the afternoon train from St. Pancras. Get to my home in Ockbrook, near Derby, a little after dark. Good to be back home once more.

November 25th
My last day at home. Visit the dentist in Derby in the morning. He tells me he will be conscripted in two weeks’ time. He is a married man and has to leave his home and a good practice, and he is feeling very bitter about it all. He declares that when he gets into the trenches, he will bayonet every German he can.

Many a man, before going to France, has talked the same way, yet when he has been confronted by some pitiful object with uplifted hands pleading “Kamerad,” he has not given him the cold steel—more than likely, he has given him nothing more deadly than a smile and a cigarette. He too has experienced the agony of mind and body that this poor devil of a Fritzie has gone through, in a war that’s none of his choice either, and he leaves the hating to those who never go near the trenches.

The further you go from the front line, the more hate there is. Any soldier on leave from the trenches knows that full well.

November 26th
Leave Derby for London by the noon train. A big crowd on the train, and I have to stand most of the way. Should have left for France yesterday and don’t feel any too easy wandering around London, for there is always the danger, when one’s leave has expired, of being picked up by the Military Police.

Meet Edmond outside the Maple Leaf Club, and we spend the evening together. Go to *Zig-Zag* at the Hippodrome. A good revue, George Robey being in great form.

November 27th
Leave Victoria Station at 7:00 a.m. Have taken two extra days’ leave but know full well that nothing will be said about it when I turn my pass in at the O.R. on my return to the Battalion. Members of the 49th can consider themselves lucky in belonging to an outfit in which red-tape discipline does not exist—and the morale of the Battalion is all the better for it.

A thousand men from the Canadian West, belonging to the same strata of society and working together in good comradeship, do not need to be bound down by strict army rules and regulations, however necessary they may be for professional soldiers.

On arrival at Dover, we are marched up the hill and confined to barracks. Overseas troops are all bunched up together, and there is a lot of grousing at not being allowed out of the camp. Three Aussies express their intention of walking out of the gate, where there is a solitary sentry on duty—a Life Guardsman—and the rest of the crowd are prepared to follow them.

But at this moment, word comes along that we can go into the town. A friendly South African and I spend the evening together in Dover. Go to a picture show and afterward get an excellent supper at the Café Royal.

Before coming to France, this South African served in the campaign which resulted in the conquest of German S.W. Africa, and he has some interesting yarns to tell of the fighting there. It was all rather in the nature of a picnic compared to the Western Front. Only one aeroplane figured in the entire campaign, and that was a Fritzie. He had no bombs, so he used to drop lightly detonated shells from his plane, and in order to keep their noses pointed to the ground, he fixed tiny parachutes to them.

November 28th
An early reveille, and we embark from Dover at 8:00 a.m. Wonder, as the white cliffs recede into the distance, how many more Blighty leaves there will be before this bloody business is over and the plug is put back into the world.

Three Forty-Niners—Maxey, Telford, and I—are traveling together. It takes nearly three hours to cross the Channel to Boulogne. A fairly good crossing. March up the big hill we know so well to the same old camp. The camp has improved a lot, though, for there is some system to it now, and we find a hot dinner awaiting us.

A good concert at night in the Y.M.C.A. A hypnotist provides the best entertainment of the evening. He asks for someone to step up from the audience for him to work on, and a young gunner volunteers for the job. He gets him under a trance and then tells him he is sitting on a wasps’ nest. The man thereupon jumps to his feet with a yell, tears off his tunic, and slashes around wildly with it. Uses some choice language too. No put-up job either, but a genuine case of hypnotism.

November 29th
Reveille at 1:30 a.m. Leave camp, after a good breakfast, about 3:30 a.m. The train does not pull out until two hours later. We get to Lillers shortly before noon. Jump a motor lorry going to St. Hilaire, six kilometers distant, where the Battalion is in billets.

Good to be back with the Transport Section again. Seems I got my leave at an opportune time, for there have been some big moves and heavy marching during the past three weeks.

George Harper and Mose Williams are back from their Italian leave. They were away twenty-eight days altogether, so they’ve had quite a trip of it. They state that British troops on leave in Rome are treated none too cordially, for the Italians, for some reason rather hard to fathom, are blaming Great Britain for the recent Italian reverses on the Austrian front.

A number of original Forty-Niners, including Pete Livingstone, Pilkie, Collis, and Mackenzie, have rejoined the Battalion on a recent draft. Enjoy a long walk with Pete Livingstone in the evening. He states he is glad to be back in France—it is preferable to the reserve camp in England.

November 30th
Leach, driver of the Medical cart, being away on leave, I am detailed for his job. Napoleon, the big mule that goes with the cart, is a good-natured beast—rather odd for a mule. But he’ll eat half a horse blanket and two or three feet of rope during the night if he gets the chance. Make a trip in the afternoon to Lillers with Napoleon and the cart for supplies for the officers’ mess.

December 1st
The coming Federal election on the conscription issue is the main subject of conversation these days. No two ways about the opinion in the Battalion on this issue—the general feeling is that it is high time Canada adopted conscription.

Yet none of us would have liked to have seen conscription in force when the Forty-Ninth was recruited, apart from the fact that it would have been absurd to have had conscription in those early days of the war when one almost needed pull to get into the army.

Run into Greenfield in the afternoon and have a long talk with him. He is back with the Battalion with a commission and is in charge of his old platoon, No. 2. He has some hard-bitten characters in it, such likable ruffians as Jack Carmichael and Husky Leddingham—perhaps the Battalion’s two worst soldiers out of the line and the two best in it.

Greenfield is a boyish sort of fellow to handle such men, but he’ll do it all right and gain their respect at the same time.

December 3rd
General Griesbach inspects the Battalion and afterward hands out eighteen decorations. It is very fitting that Billy should dish out these awards, for it can be said that he has helped indirectly in the winning of them.

We know what part he has played in building up that something—morale, esprit de corps, call it what you will—that safeguards the Battalion from being let down, no matter how tough the situation may be.

It is this fighting spirit, together with a large dose of personal bravery, that results in a man like Kinross rushing a German machine-gun, as he did at Passchendaele, and taking on the crew single-handed.

Remember a graphic account of the deed furnished by an eyewitness—the latter described the thrill he got as he saw the butt of Kinross’ rifle rising and falling amongst that German machine-gun crew.

Billy afterward gives us a talk on conscription, explaining the necessity for it now. Some bombing in the vicinity at night. No casualties.

December 5th
Take Napoleon and the cart to Aire for mess supplies. The weather is bitterly cold, and it’s a job to keep warm. Dickenson comes along with me, and we have supper together. Aire is a typical French town about the size of Poperinghe.

A lot of French artillery is on the roads these days, all traveling south. Their horses are in fair condition, but the general appearance of the outfits is sloppy.

December 6th
A football match in the afternoon between officers of the 49th and the Princess Pats. The latter win, 1-0, after a very keen game.

After watching the game, I go over to the Orderly Room and record my vote for the Union Government. Go to a good show in the evening in the Y.M.C.A., given by the *YEmma* concert party. They put on a playlet of W.W. Jacobs very well. Many allusions in the show to the present election, with Laurier getting some rough digs.

December 8th
Leach comes back from leave, and I hand Napoleon and the cart back to him without much regret.

A Robbie Burns evening is held, with the speaker being a certain Capt. Cameron, in the Y.M.C.A. He is a fine speaker, and he has an appreciative audience.

One wonders, thinking of the anguish of Burns’ sensitive soul as he disturbed a field-mouse’s nest with his plough, what his feelings would have been had he seen humanity suffer as it did at Passchendaele. And one wonders how one raised so humbly got to know so much about humanity and human emotions.

The wisest man the warl’ e’er saw,
He dearly loved the lasses, O.

As he signs himself. Was it from the lasses, who raised him up to seventh heavens of delight one day, and down to the depths of sorrow the next, that he derived his understanding?

December 10th
George Harper leaves the Battalion and goes down to the base. He will likely make it back to Canada, and we hope, for his own sake, that he does. It is only his stout heart that has kept him going so long. Active service in France, with all its hardships and privations, is no place for a man in his late fifties.

Am detailed to take over George Harper’s place in the feed shed, dishing out the hay and oats. A bunch of us take in *The Dumbells* show at night. A first-rate entertainment, *The Dumbells* being one of the best concert parties in France.

A big hit is the song of the conscientious objector:

Send out your army and your navy,
Send out your rank and file,
Send out your good old Territorials,
They’ll face the danger with a smile.
Send out the Boys of the Old Brigade
Who made Old England free,
Send out my brother, my sister, and my mother,
But for Gawd’s sake don’t send me.

The audience joins in the refrain with great gusto. No wonder stolid Germans do not understand the British sense of humour. In the *Daily Mail* recently, it was stated that songs of the British Tommy, such as *I Want to Go Home,* were being quoted in German newspapers as evidence of the hopeless morale of the British Army!

December 12th
Get the good news of the fall of Jerusalem. Good news is eagerly welcomed these days, with the fiasco of Passchendaele still such a recent memory.

George MacLeod leaves the Battalion to everyone’s regret. He’s going to be missed in the line. There’s many a Forty-Niner, the writer for one, who can say he felt less scared in the trenches when Major MacLeod was around.

Will never forget how cool-headed he was when Hooge Cellar was blazing fiercely, in the Salient in ’16, and a number of us, including himself, might have been roasted alive.

December 13th
Spend the evening in the Y.M.C.A. with Pete Livingstone, Bill English, and Botel. We argue about how long the war is going to last. Botel says he can see no end to it—he says there will be no *after the war* problems because the war will never end!

“Bo” always argues this way, with a most doleful expression on his dial, and his pessimism—or, to be more correct, his assumed pessimism—has become a standing joke.

December 16th
The Battalion is to return to the line tomorrow. The advance party, with kitchens, sets off for Camblain Abbe. Limbers are loaded up, and we prepare for an early start on the morrow, but at 11:00 p.m., word is received that the move is cancelled.

The advance party will do some swearing, for it has been a wet and stormy day.

December 17th
Earle Hay being away, I represented the Transport Section at a meeting of the Battalion Magazine Committee. Ten of us were at this meeting, among them Majors Weaver and Winser, Lts. Edwards and Greenfield, and Sgt. Dorway. We resolved to go back to the old cover of the magazine.

Considerable bombing activity at night. Sounds as though Aire was getting it in the neck.

December 19th
Bitter cold weather continues. Tony Peterson gets a letter from George Harper in which the old fellow states that he is being sent back to Canada. Reading between the lines, one realizes with what reluctance George Harper is saying goodbye to active service in France, for he is the sort of fellow who doesn’t fancy leaving this job on the Western Front before it is through.

Spend the evening in a nearby house where coffee is for sale. Don’t particularly want coffee, but do want a warm place for writing letters. The good people of the house are Belgian refugees. The only wage earner is the father, who works in a coal mine nine kilometers distant. He has to walk there and back every day.

Wonder what a Canadian miner would feel about it if he had to walk five or six miles twice a day, to and from his work.

December 20th
Our hopes of spending Christmas in St. Hilaire are dispelled, for we get orders to move tomorrow. A big consignment of Christmas mail arrives from England and Canada. Parcels have a knack of coming just before a move—and making heavy packs still heavier.

December 21st
An early start. Travel by way of Lillers, Barlin, and Petit Sains. Reach our destination, Sans Gobelle, about 3:30 p.m. Good warm billets, which we take over from the C.F.A. Civilians evidently thought a lot of the artillery fellows, and they give us a warm welcome too.

Wallace and I are detailed for picket duty at night. A bitter night, and the poor brutes of horses are restless and cold. The Battalion is to go into the line tomorrow.

December 23rd
Get settled down in our billets at Sans Gobelle, also known as Fosse 10. Hec McKenzie and I rig up a shed for the hay and oats.

The Battalion moves up the line and takes over from the 15th Battalion. The latter leave their deep, warm dugouts with reluctance. They state they are far more comfortable in the trenches than they are out of the line.

An American officer is attached to the 49th for sniping instruction. He probably could not have come to a better spot, for we can be justified in assuming that our snipers are second to none.

A number have Indian blood in them, and their hunters’ instinct and patience have bagged them many a Fritzie.

Am reminded as I write of a chance meeting Billy Hill, of "A" Company, and I had with Paddy Riel, an 8th Battalion sniper of Indian descent, in the trenches at Plugstreet in 1915. He told us how he had seen a German private peering over the trench that morning.

The man presented a good target, but there was something about his attitude which prompted Paddy to believe that he was being forced to show himself, so he refrained from shooting. Paddy’s hunch proved correct, for as soon as the private disappeared from view, the head and shoulders of a German officer appeared—the latter was apparently satisfied that he could now look around in safety.

This was what Paddy was waiting for, and after he had pulled the trigger, he had the satisfaction of being able to cut another notch in the butt of his rifle.

Paddy Riel will do no more sniping, for he lies under the poppies now. If the shades of Paddy and his uncle should meet—his uncle Louis Riel, who was hanged at Regina after leading the ill-fated revolt of the half-breeds in ’85—the meeting should prove an interesting one.

December 24th
Christmas Eve. Spend the evening in the Y.M.C.A., a warm, comfortable building. There is a piano in the place, and a lively crowd of artillery fellows are around it, singing songs which one does not hear in drawing rooms.

They sing a verse to *“Mademoiselle from Armentiers”* which I have not heard before, in which the daughter tells her mother she is not too young to enjoy wedded bliss with the soldier:

O mother, I am not too young,
Go and ask the gardener’s son,
Inkie dinkie, parlez-vous.

But the crowd finishes up with singing carols. The pianist perhaps remembers past Christmas Eves and little knots of singers outside front doors in English villages.

December 25th
Christmas Day celebration is postponed, the Battalion being in the trenches. From all accounts, this is a cushy part of the line.

Two companies in reserve are living in the cellars of Leivin. They can keep warm easily enough, for there are stacks of coal around the disused mine shafts. One of our limbers, after delivering rations up the line, returns with a load of coal.

The Germans held this ground once, and it is they who mined this coal. When sweating Fritzies dug the coal, they little

December 27th
Heavy fall of snow during the night. Sorry to hear of the death of Jimmie Armstrong up the line. Got to know him well when I was in the Signalling Section, and you would have to go a long way to find a more cheerful or healthy young soldier. Remember his good humour being put to a severe test one day in ’16 while marching down to the Somme. Someone—young Cutress, I believe—put a good-sized rock in his pack before the march started. Jimmie gave a grunt as he swung the pack on his back and remarked that it seemed to weigh a ton, but he suspected nothing. And when, on unpacking at night, he found the stone, he only swore good-naturedly. Spend evening in Tony Peterson’s billet, writing letters. Tony and half a dozen other fellows there are well away, for they have a living-room as well as a room to sleep in. Tony and I afterwards go over to the Church Army hut for coffee and biscuits.

December 29th
Word comes down from the line that Chip Kerr’s brother was killed yesterday. Known to me only by name, like many another Forty-Niner. Pat, Len, and I go to the Y.M.C.A. in the evening and take in a Christmas pantomime given by *“The Mere Details”* concert party. Show nothing to write home about.

December 31st
New Year’s Eve, but there is nothing in the nature of a celebration. Pat and I go out and get a supper of eggs and chips. As we sit over our meal, we wonder how many more New Year’s Eves we will spend in France—this is the third the Forty-Ninth has spent on the Western Front. A year hence will millions of the world’s young men, with no hatred in their hearts, still be killing each other off? It is hard, well-nigh impossible in fact, to reconcile this senseless slaughter year after year of the world’s finest manhood with the belief that there is some supreme power that orders everything for the best. Yet how can one behold the grandeur of a sunset, smell the fragrance of a rose, or listen to the singing of a lark, without feeling that some such power exists.

# **1918**

January 1st, 1918
New Year’s Day passes quietly in the Transport Lines. We are glad to hear that Billy (General Griesbach) has started the year well by being awarded the C.M.G. The Battalion is still up the line. Number of our killed so far this trip is four.

January 3rd
The weather is bitterly cold. An army order is received that the oats for the horses have to be boiled. A boiler is rigged up, and a couple of men with horses and a limber go up to Lieven for coal, of which there are hundreds of tons piled around the mine heads. We are fortunate, these cold nights, in having plenty of coal to burn. Pete Livingstone and I go out in the evening and get supper in an egg and chip joint. Three artillerymen at our table tell some mighty tall yarns about the accuracy of their fire. It is obvious they take intense pride in their batteries.

January 4th
The Battalion is doing six days in reserve, after which they move into the line again. We are sorry to hear that Major Winser is leaving the 49th. He is to be a Brigade Major in the 4th Division. His understanding of men, his fair-mindedness, his sympathetic nature, and his unfailing good humor have made him one of the most popular officers in the Battalion. For my own part, I will always remember with gratitude the particularly fine letter he sent to my parents when my brother was killed in the Ypres Salient in ’16.

January 7th
Lloyd George’s speech in the House of Commons arouses a lot of favorable comment, with everybody considering it a move towards peace. And never did men long for anything so intensely as men in the trenches now long for peace. Tony Peterson gets a letter from George Harper, who tells how he arrived in hospital, in Norfolk, on Christmas Eve.

In the evening, a bunch of us go to an entertainment in the Y.M.C.A. put on by “The Ramblers” concert party. It’s a good show. One of the party tells a tale of a Scotch soldier who lay at death’s door in a base hospital. He asked, as a dying request, that he be allowed to Hear the skirl of the pipes once more. Under the circumstances, the hospital authorities decided to grant his request, but considerable difficulty was experienced in securing a piper, for no kiltie regiment happened to be down at the base at the time. Eventually, however, a piper was found. He was on his way to Scotland on leave, but he had his bagpipes with him, and he readily agreed to go up to the hospital, though it meant missing the night boat.

On arrival at the hospital, he began to play, and as soon as the sick kiltie heard the sound of the pipes, his eyes took on a luster that had not been there for days. All night long that gallant man marched up and down the ward, playing the pipes, and at dawn, he had the supreme satisfaction of knowing that the patient, whose life had been despaired of, had turned the corner and was on his way to recovery. But alas, all the other patients in the ward were dead!

Another good tale is told of a Canadian soldier on leave in England. While in a train, he happened to let slip rather a bad cuss word—and anyone who has been on leave knows how easy it was to do so after being in soldiers’ company for perhaps a year or more. Before he had time to excuse himself, a hatchet-faced woman seated opposite him snapped out, “Please don’t swear before me.” He at once replied, “I am sorry madam, but how was I to know you wanted to swear first?”

**January 9th**Snow falls heavily, and a regular blizzard rages all day. The Battalion is to come out of the line tomorrow and spend six days in Souchey dugouts. George Young’s name appears amongst those awarded the D.C.M.

Finish *“Trent’s Last Case,”* as fine a detective tale as one could wish to read, for it keeps one guessing to the very end—and guessing wrong. If there is any criticism at all, it is that the author does not play quite fair in the way in which he misleads the reader.

**January 13th**Word is received that Kinross has been awarded the V.C. General elation sweeps through the ranks that a second member of the Battalion should gain this decoration, the highest honor a soldier can receive. And a V.C. earned in Passchendaele mud can be said to be doubly earned.

The hardships, horror, and misery of that terrible low-lying Ridge—where the wounded and exhausted sank in the mud and were drowned—did not break the spirit of Kinross. No, it made it flash out and earned him undying fame.

His exploit, as related by members of D Coy., is a thrilling one. It was when our attack at Passchendaele was held up by a German machine gun that Kinross decided it was up to him to do something about it. Divesting himself of all equipment save his rifle, he was able to ooze his way through the mud unnoticed until almost on top of the gun. Then a mad rush and a desperate fight between a lone Canadian and six German machine-gunners—with the lone and bloody Canadian the sole survivor at the finish.

And be it remembered, all ye who are inclined to judge a soldier by the brightness of his buttons, that this was the action of D Coy’s sloppiest parade soldier.

**January 15th**A wet, stormy day. The barn where we are billeted is anything but weather-proof, and everything and everybody gets wet. Spend the evening in the Church Army Hut, playing chess with one of the Princess Pats. Blessed be the Chinaman or Hindu, or whoever it was who invented chess, hundreds or perhaps thousands of years ago. Troubles and worries, even physical discomforts, seem to vanish into thin air while concentrating on chess.

On picket duty, second shift, at night. Horses are quiet, and I spend most of the time around the stove in the Brigade harness room. Paddy O’Doherty is the Brigade picket, and he helps the time to pass quickly with his entertaining talk.

**January 17th**The Battalion celebrates Christmas Day—as already recorded, the fellows were in the line on the 25th of December. Dinner is held in the Church Army Hut, with the officers acting as waiters. This is followed by speeches and an entertainment.

It is not an easy matter to work up the Christmas spirit three weeks or more after the day has passed, but John Barleycorn helps out all he can, and a good time is had by everybody. The Battalion is to move back into the line tomorrow.

**January 19th**Good to read in the papers of a substantial decline in submarine losses. So much shipping has been sent down to Davy Jones’s locker recently that fellows were almost beginning to lose faith in the British Navy and were wondering if Great Britain was going to be starved into defeat.

Hear with much regret of Capt. Meade’s death up the line. "A" Company loses a good O.C.

**January 21st**The Battalion is to come out of the trenches tomorrow and will be on working parties for six days. A lot of work is being done behind the lines these days. A third line of defence is being built, and it looks as though Fritzie is expected to attempt a big offensive shortly.

Capt. Meade’s funeral is held in the afternoon. Smallwood’s speech in the House of Commons, as reported in the *Daily Mail*, arouses a lot of comment. Everybody regards his indictment of the War Office as amply justified.

The average man of the line is a discerning sort of fellow and is ready to give credit where credit is due.

**January 22nd**Move to Hersin, only a matter of four kilometers distance. Favoured by a fine day. We are billeted in the attic of a big estaminet. A cold billet if nothing was done about it, but it is not long before a stove is made out of an old can, and stove pipes out of empty hardtack tins.

Then a hole for the stove pipes is punched through the brick and plaster of the chimney, which runs through the attic, and we are soon snug and warm enough. The Transport Section contains many a handy man who has been accustomed to rustling for himself, and it is surprising what he does, out of very little material, to make his lot more comfortable.

That is where a Western Canadian battalion has it all over so many other battalions, particularly Imperial battalions, the latter so often being composed of men who, having been in one groove all their lives, have not been in a position to develop initiative.

**January 23rd**There is a big Chink camp opposite us, and well we know it, for the wind is blowing from that direction today. But when the wind is blowing from our camp to theirs, they probably think we white people are a smelly lot too.

They haul their rations from the dump in baskets on the end of a pole balanced on their shoulders, and it is surprising the heavy loads they carry in this manner.

Payday in the afternoon, and the usual rowdy time in the billets at night. But the drunks in the section are not a quarrelsome lot, with one rather noticeable exception, and there is seldom any trouble on these nights—though there is noise enough to awaken the dead.

**January 28th**The town gets shelled and considerable damage is done, though nothing lands in our immediate neighborhood. Spend the evening in the Battalion Recreation Hut, which is run by the Padre.

A good place to put in an evening, for it is warm and well-lighted, and there is a fair selection of books to read. In addition, coffee, biscuits, and cigarettes are dished out free of charge, though presumably the regimental funds foot the bill.

**February 3rd**The Battalion has been here, in Hersin, for the past two weeks, and there is no sign of a move yet. We are cheered by the news of industrial strife in Germany. Heaven grant there is something to it, for it might prove a quick and bloodless way to end this insane war.

**February 4th**A bunch of 49th officers go up and inspect the old line at Loos. Loos was before our time in France, but from all accounts there was little in the nature of a victory about that battle, though the press kidded the public otherwise.

In the evening, a number of us go and see *The Private Secretary* by the Y. Emma concert party. As good an amateur performance as one could wish to see, and we all enjoy it.

**February 6th**George Young goes away for his commission. We are sorry to lose him. We don’t regard him as the perfect sergeant, for we know no such animal exists, but we know the section could hardly have had a better-natured sergeant during the past two years.

About the nearest approach to him losing his temper was one day he told the section he had no intention of putting charges against anyone—but if anybody did not do as he was told, he would take him out into the bushes and knock hell out of him. In sooth, not a wise thing for many a sergeant to say, but in his case, George Young knew, and the section knew, that he could back up his words. Hardly the sort of discipline that you would find in a regiment of the Guards, but it goes all right in the 49th.

A little incident, one evening in the early summer of ’16, is, I think, typical of George Young. We were camped near Poperinghe, and George Young, after spending the evening in the canteen, rode his big grey horse Barney into one of the huts.

Something scared Barney inside the hut, and he wheeled round and bolted—perhaps the only quick move that stolid old grey ever made. Horse and rider got through the door all right, but they fell in the ditch outside, George Young being pinned down by the horse. It was some time before man and horse could be extricated, but neither was the worse for the tumble.

George Young then remounted Barney and rode away, with a wave to the crowd and the remark, “Well boys, here goes a good horse and a poor man.”

**February 8th**Dave Irons is promoted to Transport Sergeant. He has been a popular corporal, and there is general satisfaction over the promotion. His dour Scotch nature, his sense of fairness in handling men, and his fondness and knowledge of horses all combine to make him the right man in the right place. Bob Amos gets two stripes—another popular promotion.

**February 10th**A stormy, wet day. Football match with the Princess Pats is called off on account of the weather. Transport loses a horse—Eagle, the rangy grey of Paquette’s team. First horse of the section to pass in his checks, though a number of the pack animals have been killed.

The windstorm increases in violence after sundown, and it is good to have a stove in the billet and plenty of fuel. Fellows spend the evening around it telling yarns. The talk drifts to bears and timber wolves, and many a story is told of the northern woods. Amongst them is the yarn of a trapper who was treed by three timber wolves. For about a couple of hours, there was nothing doing, but the trapper then saw the three hungry brutes put their heads together. Thereupon, two of them slunk away, leaving the third animal on guard at the foot of the tree. Before long, the two wolves returned, escorting a beaver between them and—believe it or not—they put the beaver to work chewing down the tree! The ultimate fate of the trapper was not disclosed!

**February 11th**The Chink labour battalion, in their camp across the road, has a big celebration of some festival or other. Flags are flying, and if noise is any criterion of their enjoyment, they must be having a great time, for they are raising a dandy hullabaloo. We are glad to get a visit from Billy (General Griesbach). Walker Taylor is with him as his aide-de-camp. Fellows back from pass confirm the rumor that the offices of the paper *John Bull* were recently wrecked by a German bomb. No one will be any the worse off if that rag of a paper is never printed again.

**February 13th**German airman drops propaganda papers printed in French. Well got up and profusely illustrated. Such literature, of course, is intended to undermine the spirit of French civilians but is hardly likely to achieve that object. In the evening, Becker and I go to “The Dumbells” show. “Marjorie” sings *“If You Were the Only Boy in the World and I Was the Only Girl”*, giving the glad eye meanwhile to the Brigadier (Daddy Dyer) sitting in the front row. The old Brigadier enters into the spirit of the thing thoroughly, and great is the delight of the troops when “she” presents him with an artificial rose. A grand evening. It is a little hard to understand why “The Dumbells” are such a rattling good concert party. Individually they don’t seem to be much to write home about, but under Capt. Plunkett’s management, they have become a most talented and vivacious troupe. As soon as the curtain rises, it is obvious that all the members of the party are out to enjoy themselves, and their high spirits quickly float across the footlights, and the happiest of evenings is had by everybody. Those of us who return to civilian life from this mess on the Western Front will treasure highly, amongst war memories, the concerts provided by “The Dumbells.” We will remember, for instance, Al Plunkett, togged up as a cowboy, singing *“Down Texas Way.”* The words in themselves smack rather of sickly sentiment, but Plunkett strikes a very different note as he sings the song.

**February 17th**Some shells dropped into Hersin during the day. Several casualties amongst civilians. Hear that the Battalion is to move back to Neuville St. Vaast on the 21st inst. Some of the officers ride up and inspect the line which we are to take over. A cold night and we hug the stove. The talk drifts to mean horses and Slim Newport, in the course of an argument, raises a laugh by remarking, “I don’t believe you’ve ever seen a good ‘bad horse.’” A great boy is Slim. He’ll argue on any subject under the sun, and the less he knows about it the better he will argue.

**February 19th**Manoeuvres carried out on a large scale, under the assumption that Fritzie has broken through the line. From all accounts, a big offensive on his part is imminent, but he’ll be supremely out of luck if he tries to pull off anything on this front. Manoeuvres do not affect the Transport much, but we have a “stand-to” in the morning.

**February 21st**Battalion leaves camp for Neuville St. Vaast. B. Coy. not with the Battalion, for they left for Ferfay yesterday for a two weeks course. We get to Neuville St. Vaast in good time. The Transport Section fares well there, for our bunkhouse is a good one, and the barns for the horses are about the best we’ve struck since landing in France. In the evening, run across Neville Jones, who has just returned to the Battalion after sixteen months in Blighty. We talk over the early days in ’16 when we were on the same signalling station in the line. It is seldom that a member of the 49th felt like cursing “Billy,” but we did, on the Dranoutre front one night when, on leaving our dugout, our worthy Colonel accidentally upset our supper into the red-hot coke of the brazier. A juicy steak it was too, and the bully beef we had to eat in its place was consumed in the deepest gloom.

**February 23rd**Charlie Matheson and Billie Palmer, with their teams and limbers, are transferred to the Chinese Labour camp for an indefinite period. Needless to remark, Bob Magrath, Slim Newport, and others make the most of an occasion such as this, and they get a good deal of kidding. We get a glimpse of General Haig as he drives by the camp in the afternoon. A full moon at night and a lot of bombing in the neighbourhood.

**February 26th**Capt. Hudson, former Transport Officer, comes round and looks over the stables. His job now is to supervise the growing of potatoes for the troops, and it follows that he is known as O.C. Spuds. Read an interesting article in the *Saturday Evening Post* by George Pattulo. It gives one a good idea of what American troops are doing in France. The writer would appear to be allowed more latitude by the censor than a British journalist would get. Tony Peterson comes back from his second leave in Blighty, and he gives us a most entertaining account of his doings.

**February 28th**Get a cheque for twenty francs from the *Daily Mail* for an article I submitted about a month ago, the subject matter being an imaginary conversation in a front-line dugout.

**March 1st**True to tradition, March comes in like a lion. A biting cold wind in our faces as we march to Villers au Bois. Shortly after we reach camp, a small German propaganda balloon falls to the ground a few hundred yards away. Fellows go to the spot and find a bundle of papers attached to it. They are printed in faultless English, with the object of weakening British morale. But the effort is a clumsy one, for there is nothing on the four pages of the paper which rings true. One page is taken up with letters, purporting to be written by British prisoners of war, who tell of the lovely time they are having. But the writer of them was sadly lacking in his knowledge of the character of Thomas Atkins, for they are couched in language which no British soldier would use. The German propagandist who laboriously composed them would have been greatly chagrined had he been able to see the fellows reading the paper round the bunkhouse stove that evening.

He little thought he was providing the troops with some good laughs — instead of making deserters out of them. The best effort at propaganda in the paper is an article beginning, “Look here, you fellows, we know you are pretty good sports.” But there is nothing convincing about it, and it can be regarded as an insult to the intelligence of the average British soldier.

**March 2nd**General satisfaction over the result of the Canadian soldiers’ vote on conscription. According to the papers, the Western battalions voted 98% in favour of conscription and the Union Government.

**March 5th**A letter I get from home mentions that some relations in Sidcup, Kent, are well acquainted with Capt. Hale of D Coy. They state that during a recent air raid on London, where he happened to be at the time, he sat astride one of the lions in Trafalgar Square.

**March 7th**Colonel Weaver goes to Ferfay, taking George McLeod’s place there. The Battalion moves up the line, with George McLeod in charge. The troops are in good spirits as they march up to the trenches, and they are singing as they pass the Transport Lines. Amongst the songs they sing is that soldier’s ditty which starts so tenderly, “I love my wife, I love her dearly,” but does not continue in quite the same strain.

Charlie Matheson and Billie Palmer, with their teams and limbers, return to the Transport Section after being attached to the Chinese Labour outfit for the past fortnight. As they enter the bunkhouse, they are greeted with a great chorus of pidgin Chinee. They seem to have enjoyed themselves, and there is many a roar of laughter round the bunkhouse stove after supper as they relate their experiences amongst the Chinks.

**March 8th**All Russians on the Western Front are sent back to the base, Russia being no longer in the war. There are but nine left in the 49th, and these take their departure. They are good men too, and some of them don’t want to go, though it means exchanging filth and danger for comparative comfort and safety. Their reluctance to leave speaks well for the good fellowship which is so much in evidence in the Battalion.

Remember when the 49th got its first Russian draft, a small draft of about half a dozen men. They were sent up to join us in the line at Hooge in the late winter of 1915-16, and they were utterly played out when they reached the front-line trenches. They had been sent up through all the mud with full and complete packs on somebody’s fool order — somebody who knew nothing of the Culvert and other spots which had to be crawled through.

**March 12th**Word comes down from the line that the 42nd pulled off a raid yesterday, only to find that Fritzie had beat it and left his front line deserted. They returned without being able to secure prisoners.

In the evening, Pete Livingstone and I take a walk over to Vimy Ridge and see the memorials erected by the Canadian artillery and other outfits in memory of the dead. Fine, imposing monuments, built of native stone. Afterwards, go round to *The Dumbells* show, but it is impossible to get in for the crowd is so great.

A poker game in the bunkhouse at night is broken up, and there is a bit of a roughhouse. But the stove, which gets upset and its contents scattered, is the only casualty.

**March 14th, 1918**Word comes down the line that four men of the Battalion were badly gassed last night. Drop round to the Orderly Room in the evening and find Bill English, Rowlands, Botel, and "Tiny" Wall there. "Tiny" has taken up Pelmanism and is tremendously enthusiastic about it. He tries to get us interested, but his efforts result in little more than levity from his audience of four, of whom "Bo" is perhaps the most frivolous. Hear that the C.M.R.s are to pull off a raid tomorrow.

**March 15th**Hear some particulars of the C.M.R. raid which was pulled off early this morning. They returned with fourteen prisoners. There was considerable fighting in the German trenches, and it is estimated that between twenty and thirty of the enemy were killed. Casualties of the C.M.R.s number twenty. We see ten of the prisoners as they are marched down the road past our Transport Lines—a poor, dejected-looking lot.

**March 17th**A compulsory and consequently most unpopular church parade. Men will never become religious by having it crammed down their throats. As we are returning from the service, we see a German observation balloon brought down in flames. German balloons can be seen in large numbers these days, and they would seem to presage an early offensive on the part of the enemy.

**March 18th**Men and horses are feeling good these grand spring mornings. A bunch of artillery fellows, out exercising their horses, let them have their heads, and they race wildly past our lines, their riders yelling for all they are worth. Spend the evening in Vimy University marquee in Neuville St. Vaast, browsing among the books there.

**March 20th**There is a ground mist in the early morning which hides the lower half of the tower of the old monastery on Mount St. Eloi. But the upper half is in plain view above the mist and is an object of ethereal beauty. One would have to go a long way to see a fairer sight, and any artist who could faithfully convey the scene to canvas would be assured of immortality. We look on and admire as the sun slowly rolls the mist away. Not the least admirer of the scene is a certain member of the section who, somehow or other up till then, had always conveyed the impression that his main interests in life were centered in beer and women.

**March 21st**Take Bugs and Buster, both saddle horses, to water at noon, as there happens to be no one to look after them. The Division water troughs are about a quarter of a mile distant, and there is a military policeman there to see that everybody dismounts while watering the horses—a damn-fool army order, for it is easy to get your feet trodden on while the animals are milling around the troughs.

The regular military policeman is a good fellow, and he tells everyone, in a decent but firm manner, to dismount, reminding them at the same time that Divisional officers, from nearby buildings, can see whether the order is being complied with or not. And he never has any trouble with the men. But today, there is a military policeman of a different stamp on the job.

Seeing a man seated on his horse as he waters it, he gallops down from the entrance and yells, "Get to hell off that horse!" The rider does not budge and remarks that it is not his nature to obey an order given in that fashion. The military policeman thereupon says, "I'll fix you, my bucko," and, taking out his notebook, demands the man's name and unit (he was showing no badges, for he wore neither cap nor tunic).

"So you want my name and outfit," he says. "Well, I'll let you have 'em. My name's Pork, and I belong to the Beans Battalion." A delighted roar goes up from the crowd around the trough, and then from all corners, general abuse is shouted at that unfortunate M.P. He is wearing a D.C.M., and someone, in a foghorn voice that can be heard above the tumult, wants to know where he swiped it. The battalion. But it's funny that the sight of a sore-footed private riding the Colonel's horse while the Colonel hoofs it should raise a lump in one's throat and bring moisture to one's eyes. McCallum returns from Boulogne with a remount. Apparently, he thinks it an occasion to celebrate, and he and Blakeley return to the bunkhouse feeling very happy. Sleep is quite out of the question for everybody until they settle down for the night. Mac does a little philosophizing and murmurs before he goes off to sleep, "This ol' world is just what a guy makes it. I've always found it jakealloo."

He turns livid with anger, but he has the sense to know that he is a beaten man. He jabs the spurs into his horse and returns to the gate at the entrance to the enclosure. It is good to see a bully of his stamp get what's coming to him. Bugs lives up to his name and gives me a merry ride back to the lines. There is nothing but a halter on him, and holding him is out of the question as he tries to set a new record for the quarter mile.

He breaks through a long line of men and horses that are in his path at one stage, and I have to let Buster go. But he pulls up when he gets to the lines. Bugs is Dave's horse (Sergt. Irons), and he tells me, in no uncertain manner, as I am tying the horse up, that I ought to have had sense enough not to get on him without a bridle.

**March 22nd**Rain sets in, and we are glad to see it, for the ground is as dry as a bone. Hear rumors of heavy fighting down south. C.M.R.s are hurried back to the line after being out on rest for only two days. As one of their battalions passes our lines on their forced march, not an officer is to be seen mounted, for every charger, including the Colonel's, is being ridden by a sore-footed private. When you see that sort of thing, you can take it for granted

**March 23rd**An eager rush for the Paris edition of the *Daily Mail.* News is of a vague character, but it reports heavy fighting on a fifty-mile front. The situation is apparently serious, for all leave is stopped. Bethune, Bruay, Lillers, and other towns behind the lines are being heavily bombed, and Paris is being shelled by a gun which, from all accounts, must be about eighty miles distant.

The shelling of Paris causes a sensation, for it was not considered possible that a shell could be fired such a distance—one estimated to weigh half a ton. Spend the evening in the Vimy University tent. An artillery officer, an eloquent speaker, gives a talk on letter-writing. He asks for letters and, on being handed a couple, he goes through them and comments on their good points and faults.

One of his audience, at question time, says that the thought of letter-writing is always distasteful to him, yet as soon as he gets down to it, he enjoys writing a letter. Can the speaker explain why this is? The lecturer grins and admits his own experience is the same—it seemed to be a trait in human nature, and he is unable to give an adequate explanation for why it should be so.

**March 26th**Meunier, now a Divisional signaller, comes round to the Transport Lines and tells us that Albert has been captured by the enemy after heavy fighting. Wonder if the hanging figure of the Virgin has crashed down into the market square—its fall, according to superstitious civilians in ’16, would end the war. Spend the evening in the Vimy University tent. A lecture is given on the Yukon by one who was there in the gold rush of ’98. A good speaker, and his talk is interesting. He paints a vivid picture of life in Dawson during those days.

**March 28th**The area back of our lines is shelled heavily throughout the night. General "stand-to" at 8:00 a.m. Rumoured that Fritz has broken through on our right, but there is nothing to the rumour, for we get the "stand-down" about an hour later. See a number of our tanks moving across open country towards the trenches. They draw considerable fire, but none get put out of commission.

In the late afternoon, a daring German skims low over Mount St. Eloi to see what damage has been done by his artillery. He takes his time and seems unconcerned at the machine-gun fire directed at him from the ground. He makes his getaway apparently uninjured.

**March 30th**Bill English, O.R. sergeant, tells me that the Adjutant wants to see me. Go to the Orderly Room, and the Adjutant hands me an article that I had addressed to the *Daily Mail* a couple of weeks ago, telling me at the same time that it had been intercepted by the censor at the base.

No exception to the article was taken by the censor, but he has attached a note to it to the effect that it is contrary to K.R. and O. for a man on active service to send anything for publication directly to the press. Such articles must first be submitted. Censorship by the War Office. The Adjutant is quite nice about it and gives me nothing in the nature of a reprimand.

**March 31st**A softball match in the afternoon, the Canadian- and American-born of the Transport playing those born in the British Isles. Announcement of the game contains this ominous order: "Identification discs to be worn in order to facilitate the identification of corpses!" The British-born win after an hour's uproarious fun. A game such as this is one of the little things that can be entered very much on the credit side of life on active service.

Throughout the night, our bombing planes can be heard going over towards Fritzie's lines. Someone stirs in his sleep in the bunkhouse and mutters, "Give 'em hell."

**April 1st**A daring enemy pilot comes over and shoots down no less than five of our observation balloons. Gets away with it too, which prompts the inquiry, "Who's top dog in the air now?"

A number of our propaganda balloons, freed from way behind the lines, drop leaflets on German territory. In the evening, the fellows amuse themselves wrestling and trying various athletic stunts when Blakeley appears on the scene and pulls off the three-man "lazy-stick" trick. He declares he can hold any three men on the "lazy-stick." Slim Newport and Tony Peterson are his two poker-faced confidants.

The first victim is Jimmy Petersen. Blakeley sits opposite the three, Jimmy Petersen being in the center, and he tells Jimmy to put the stick under his knees "just to steady it." The four of them pull hard; Blakeley suddenly releases his grip, and Jimmy Petersen, of course, turns a swift somersault. The surprised look on Jimmy's face, as he sits up after his somersault, sets the crowd in a roar. Other victims drift along, including Billy Palmer and Earle Hay.

I’ve seen this trick pulled off before, but never as well as Blakeley, Slim, and Tony did it this evening.

**April 2nd**All the five observation balloons, which were downed yesterday, are replaced today. Major Weaver returns from Ferfay and rejoins the Battalion. Hear that our wounded in the line yesterday included Bob Wyndham.

Take a walk down to Neuville St. Vaast in the evening and am disappointed to find that Vimy University has been closed down. The serious situation on the Somme front apparently calls for every available man to be in the line.

From all accounts, the British army down south must be fighting with their backs very much to the wall. At night, we can see the line, indicated by innumerable star-shells, being pushed further and further back, and we are wondering if we are going to be outflanked.

German spies in British army uniforms are believed to be playing a very active part in these operations, and instructions are received to be on the alert for them at all times. The order apparently has not fallen on unheeding ears, for Dave Irons told us yesterday, on returning to the lines, that Lt. Ottewell (Transport officer) and he had been detained for a time as suspected spies!

**April 4th**Hard to get newspapers these days. Have not seen one for two weeks, but manage to get hold of a *Daily Mail* this morning—a couple of days old. News in it is not of a very reassuring nature.

A big draft joins the Battalion. Mostly new men, with a smattering of old-timers amongst them. Softball game in the Transport Lines in the evening. The team captained by Smalley gets beaten. He explains the defeat with the claim that "he couldn't instill that never-die spirit into some of the antiques on his side."

Smalley these days contributes considerably to the lighter side of life in the section. Last night, he told us about the one and only game of American softball he had participated in. He said he quit after a big husky guy grabbed him by the ankles and used him as a mallet to down members of the opposing team.

**April 5th**Fellows are wondering when the U.S.A. is going to get into the war with both feet. Although the States declared war a year ago, they appear to have accomplished little as yet on the Western Front.

The doughboys' song *“Over There”* has been parodied by the Canadian troops whose version runs:

"They're coming over, they're coming over, but they won't be over till it's over, over here."

And one hears many a yarn of an uncomplimentary nature to Uncle Sam. The tale is told of an American soldier who went into a London bar and ordered a glass of beer. It was served him by a barmaid, and the American, on tasting it, remarked, "Gee, but this beer's flat." And the barmaid replied, "It's been waiting for you for three years."

Then this riddle is going the rounds: "Why is the American army like a rainbow?" "Because it won't come up until the storm's over."

But all said and done, the troops are mighty glad that Uncle Sam is in with us. The almost limitless resources of the U.S.A. must eventually prove a most deciding factor in the struggle.

**April 6th**Rumours that Blighty leave is to open up again shortly, so it looks as though the situation down south is somewhat easier.

Spend the evening with my old crowd, the "Sigs." Joe Clarke and Cutress left for England today to take up their training as pilots in the Royal Air Service. McKenzie and Macdonald expect to get away in about a week's time.

Young Canadians such as Bishop have made such a name for themselves as pilots that the R.A.F. appears ready to offer commissions to any well-educated Canadians who can pass the tests. Macdonald will be missed by his fellow signallers. He is one of the best poker players in the 49th and, when the section happens to be short of rations, he always has the wherewithal, and the generosity, to supplement them with tinned goods from the canteens and the Y.M.C.A.

**April 8th**An Australian artillery outfit passes our lines in the morning. A confident-looking crowd. Aussies somehow or other always seem to give the impression that they have no doubt whatsoever as to the ultimate issue of the war; and they are the sort of fellows who will fight till hell freezes over—and then get out on skates. The First Canadian Division returned to this vicinity after a trip down to the Somme area—but they did not get into the fighting there. In the evening, Tony Peterson, Swanson, and I take in *“The Dumbells”* show. As good as ever, and it is a thoroughly happy crowd that leaves the hall at the end of the show.

**April 9th**Desultory shelling all day of the back areas. Considerable damage reported at Fort George and at Ecoivres. Take a stroll in the evening with Pete Livingstone and Botel. "Bo," who is now employed in the Orderly Room, is able to give us some news of the Somme fighting—something a little more reliable than the latrine rumours that have been going around the last few days.

**April 11th**The Battalion was to come out of the line today, but the move has been cancelled. Seems tough that they should have to remain there, seeing that they have been in the trenches now for thirty-eight days. The Canadian Corps is holding an immense front, each battalion being allotted as much ground as is usually given to a brigade. It is all a big bluff, but the Corps seems to be getting away with it.

**April 13th**We move to Carency. Horses are stabled in the best barn we've struck since arriving in France. Read in the papers of the fall of Armentières. Wonder what has happened to Mademoiselle. Of all the songs born of the war, that which tells of her easy virtue will probably live the longest—at least whenever ex-soldiers congregate.

**April 14th**Get a "stand-to" in the early hours of the morning, and all available men from Brigade are rushed up to the support trenches. Get "stand-down" a few hours later. Enemy reported to be attacking heavily up north, apparently making a thrust towards Calais.

**April 16th**A "C" Company man spends the night in the Transport Lines, and he tells us what's happening up the line. The Battalion is now over a thousand strong, but they are on such an immense front that the line is only being held very thinly. He claims you can sometimes go a hundred yards along the front-line trench and not see a man. Fellows have been in the line now for forty-three days. Stay up there amounts to a perpetual "stand-to," and boots have to be kept on all the time. But the dugouts are good—and deep too. No Man's Land is of great width, and there is consequently a lot of patrol work to be done.

**April 18th**Papers this morning contain the news of the fall of Bailleul. Very evident that the German advance has not been checked. Our own front remains quiet, and the party that was rushed up to the support trenches three days ago returns to camp.

**April 19th**Wake up to find the ground covered with snow. But coal, brought in limbers from Noeux-les-Mines, is plentiful, and we are warm and comfortable enough if we weren't so lousy. Hear that the R.C.R.'s captured a couple of Heinies last night—the nickname seems to have switched. Lately from Fritz to Heinie. Hans and Otto are two other nicknames, but these are less frequently heard. To the British Tommy, the German soldier is Jerry. Now in England and Canada, he is the Hun, which goes to show how different the feeling is once you leave the trenches. The nicknames bring to mind a sign in the trenches at Ploegsteert in '15. It stood near a low spot and read as follows:

"Otto snipes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and can't shoot worth a damn. Hans snipes on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, and he's a son-of-a-b—."

So if anyone went to his Maker at that low spot, some day when Hans was on the job, as likely as not, he went with a smile on his face.

**April 21st**Make a note of the names of some of the shacks which members of the Transport have erected. Alongside *"Iona House"* is *"Weona Mansion."* Other names are *"Laughalot,"* *"Thisisit,"* *"House of Lords,"* and *"The Lousy Three."* Comfortable shacks they are too, as far as comfort goes on active service, with an improvised stove in each one of them, and pictures from *La Vie Parisienne* and other magazines nailed on the walls.

**April 24th**Papers this morning contain the news that Richthofen, Germany's crack pilot, has been shot down and killed. Good news indeed, for the death of a great ace such as Richthofen must make itself felt throughout the entire enemy air force. He had led such a charmed life and had done such great deeds that he was regarded by his compatriots as superhuman.

**April 25th**Greatly cheered by the news of the British Navy's raid on Zeebrugge. We can stand good news these days. The story, as told in the *Daily Mail,* has all the elements of the Nelson touch. In the evening, a bunch of us go to an entertainment put on by the *Gee-Gees Concert Party.* A good show.

**April 26th**Get some particulars of the raid which "C" Company pulled off yesterday. One officer and twenty men on the party. They made contact with two enemy patrols but were unable to take any prisoners. However, shoulder straps and identification discs were secured off a dead German, which information will doubtlessly be of value to our Intelligence Department. Our party returned to the trenches with only one casualty—one man slightly wounded.

**April 27th**Receive the grave news that Kemmel Hill has been captured by the Germans. Having spent the winter of 1915–16 in the Kemmel area, we know the importance of such a stronghold. It is stated to be the highest ground in Belgium, and there would appear to be little now in the way of natural barriers between the Germans and the Channel ports. It seems as though Ypres will now have to be evacuated. A German plane flies low over our lines in the afternoon, and fellows blaze away at it with rifles, but apparently without effect.

In the evening, as we sit yarning around the stove, a typical tale is told by Becker of the late Major "Tiny" Boyle. "Tiny," on one occasion, was very much interested in a captured German trench mortar. He particularly wanted to know the composition of the shells, so he decided to take one of them to pieces. Before doing so, he made every member of his party take cover—in case the shell exploded. It is safe to say that the name of "Tiny" Boyle will be heard as long as Forty-Niners meet together and talk about the old campaign days in France.

It was one evening just about a year ago that I was riding orderly to him. He was riding Buster, "A" Company's saddle-horse, and as we reached a wood, resplendent in its spring foliage, he said, *"And now, Buster, we enter the sylvan glade."* It seemed funny hearing such a giant of a man, in his rough but kind voice, talking about sylvan glades.

**April 30th**Battalion is expected to come out of the line in a couple of days. The Canadian Corps, along with the Australians, are to be used as storm troops. Imperials are moving in on this front, with a regiment of the Somersets now camped at Neuville St. Vaast.

An Imperial staff officer rides by our wet canteen in the evening. He cuts an awkward figure on his horse—in fact, he looks as though he is on a horse for the first time in his life, and there are loud shouts everywhere of *"Get off his neck."* He must realize all right that he is in a Canadian area.

**May 2nd**Leave camp at 10:00 a.m., our destination being Frevillers. I beat it on ahead, having to prepare the feed for the horses and, by jumping motor lorries, get to Frevillers in good time. A pretty spot, way out in the country and untouched by the war, apart from the fact that the male population consists only of old men and boys.

The Battalion, which is being relieved by the Shopshires, is expected here by train about midnight. They will know how to appreciate a spot such as this, after being in the trenches for the past two months. It almost looks as though we were the first troops to be billeted in this village. Everything is dirt cheap. At a farm a couple of hundred yards down the road, one can have a mess-tin filled with milk for four cents. The milkmaid is a healthy, buxom girl—a different specimen of humanity to the girl that Billy saw milking a cow at his billets shortly after the Battalion had arrived in France.

Our worthy Colonel then and there gave orders (according to the mess caterer) that in future only tinned milk must be used in the officers' mess.

**May 4th**Battalion gets a double pay. The paymaster tells the troops to get drunk and get it over as soon as possible. There are rowdy scenes in the main street of the village in the evening, for half the Battalion is drunk, which is not surprising, seeing they have been in the line for sixty days. Perhaps the rowdiest day this little village has ever known, but the natives are making a good thing of it. Some thousands of francs must have gone into their pockets today.

**May 6th**Got orders we move tomorrow. We are to be on the move at 6:00 a.m., and all estaminets are put out of bounds tonight to eliminate any hangovers tomorrow. Our destination is Faucquenham—a name which the ribald troops at once pounce on.

**May 7th**Reveille at 3:30 a.m. Raining hard as we load up the limbers in the pitch dark. On the road at 6:00 a.m. Travel by way of Houdain and Ferfay. Rain continues to pour down heavily—seems the luck of the 49th to move on a wet day. The sky clears, however, about 10:00 a.m. Get to Faucquenham at noon. Poor lines await us there, the only horses under cover being the saddle horses.

**May 9th**Our O.C., Lt. Ottewell, says the Transport is in need of a little discipline. Gets us up at 5:45 a.m. and gives us half an hour’s cavalry drill. Battalion gets a stand-to about noon—Fritz is evidently expected to start up something. The weather is fine and warm—more like summer than spring. In the evening Pete Livingstone and I take a walk to St. Hilaire and visit our former billets in the village. We get a great welcome from the good people of the house.

**May 11th**Fine weather continues. Battalion running heavy to sport. Baseball match in the afternoon between officers and N.C.O.s. The spectators, as is customary on these occasions, seize the opportunity of getting a little of their own back, and it is obvious they have little love for one or two players on either side. The razzing, however, is thoroughly good-humoured.

**May 14th**Maneuvers held on a big scale. Artillery, trench mortars, etc., are all in action. Standing crops are ignored, but the owners are naturally compensated for damage done during these maneuvers. McKenzie leaves for Blighty to take a course of instruction at the Flying School. German bombers are over at night, but nothing is dropped in our immediate vicinity. Sounds as though St. Hilaire is getting it.

**May 17th**Life is good, all right, in this French village in the spring of the year. No word of a move yet. Baseball game between Battalion and Brigade. Frank Pilkie pitches a good game, and Battalion wins, 8-7.

**May 18th**Pasture is plentiful on the roadside, and our fellows take their horses out in the afternoon and give them a good feed. Maclean discovers a small hay meadow, and he opens the gate and turns his horses loose in the tall, luscious grass. Mac does not return to the lines until about half an hour after all the rest, and there is a big bruise on his forehead and blood trickling down his face. It seems that as he was taking his horses out of the meadow, an old farmer, owner of the land, turned up with a club and smote Mac over the head. Small wonder the old fellow was exasperated at seeing his hay meadow wantonly trampled down. Mac wants someone to go back with him to beat up the old farmer, but he is told that he only got what was coming to him and it is up to him to take his medicine. Mac's nature is not a resentful one, and he eventually admits, albeit somewhat ruefully, that perhaps after all he was in the wrong.

**May 19th**The Battalion is having more "spit and polish" than is customary while out at rest. There is a good deal of grousing about having to wash and scrub all equipment. Capt. McQueen, O.C. "D" Coy., is reported to have made a protest against the equipment washing, but he apparently got no support from the other company O.C.s.

**May 20th**Weather has been perfect for the past week. More maneuvers are held. Two casualties caused by live rounds getting in amongst the blanks. Go to a concert at night by "The Archies," an Imperial troupe. The funny man of the party, with his red nose and mother-in-law jokes, would likely make a hit with British Tommies, but he finds it rather hard going with tonight's Canadian audience.

**May 21st**Must be eighty or more in the shade today, and orders are issued that tunics are not to be worn. Payday and a poker game at night, which lasts into the small hours. It is played under difficulties, for the light has to be doused repeatedly as enemy bombing planes zoom overhead. Everyone knows the difference in the sound of the British and German engines.

**May 22nd**Read in today's paper about the big air raid on London yesterday, resulting in over two hundred casualties. But as seven Gothas were downed, the enemy had little to rejoice over. Major Bishop's articles, appearing in the *Saturday Evening Post,* make most interesting reading. They deal with his adventures in the R.F.C. and show him up for the modest hero that he is. Am on picket at night with Maffret.

**May 23rd**Yesterday we heard there had been a row between the Princess Pats and a Chinese Labour outfit. Some particulars come to hand today. It seems that a mob of Chinese workers invaded the Pats' camp, intent on rescuing one of their number who was locked up in the guardroom. Every effort was made to placate the Chinese labourers, but they became more and more excited and at last got out of hand. Order was only restored after they had been fired into, two being killed and a number wounded. The whole business is most regrettable, but the Pat sentries apparently only used their rifles as a last resort. Leu and I take in a picture show at night. *Under Two Flags* is the film, and a first-rate film it is. The place is crowded. Many a rough soldier, in his virtuous bunk tonight, will likely be dreaming of Cigarette, the gallant little wench of the Legion.

**May 24th**Maneuvers, centred around St. Pol, were to be held today, but they are cancelled owing to heavy rain. They were to take place under the assumption that Fritz had broken through and were to involve the entire Canadian Corps. Farmers will welcome the rain.

**May 25th**Baseball game in the afternoon with the Trench Mortar Battery (the "fire 'em and beat it" guys). A close game. The T.M.'s are in the lead at one stage of the play, but Manager Deacon White and Lt. Jarvis's gang of rooters pull the game out of the fire. Final score 8-7. Speaking of the T.M.'s brings to mind a little scene in the trenches in front of Neuville St. Vaast over a year ago. Before sending over a "flying pig," a trench mortar man was observed to bow his head in mock reverence and mutter, "For what Fritz is about to receive, may the Lord make him truly thankful."

**May 26th**The Brigade puts on a treat at St. Hilaire for the French kiddies of the district. Each of the four battalions has a gang of kids to represent it in the various sports and races. Princess Pat youngsters carry off the honours. A boxing bout is won by a Forty-Niner lad, who has been assiduously trained in the noble art by our worthy Provost Sergeant. All four regimental bands are on the grounds, and it is a gala day for the civilian population. At night, Aire and Lillers get shelled by long-range guns.

**May 29th**The Brigadier, "Daddy" Dyer, inspects our lines. A good old stick. Any comment he makes is worthwhile, and if he has any fault to find, you can be certain the fault is there. May he long remain with the Brigade. Mail brings a big parcel of good things from home—a welcome change to army rations. Bombing in the vicinity at night.

**May 30th**The Battalion is evidently being made as mobile as possible, for today we get an order to turn all blankets in. Our only covering at night now is an overcoat. On retiring for the night, we tie the ends of the sleeves up, stick our feet into them, and use the rest of the overcoat for a covering. The man who first thought of that deserves a decoration. Heavy fighting reported down south, with the enemy claiming fifteen thousand prisoners. Tony Peterson goes away to Abbeville on a two-month shoeing course, and everyone envies the lucky beggar.

**May 31st**Am offered a job as observer on Brigade O.P. but decline, preferring to remain with the Transport. We have been here at Faucquenham for over three weeks now and still no sign of a move, not even a latrine rumour. Long letter from home. Good to know that rations in England are improving. Baseball game in the evening between Battalion and Division Signals. The latter win 3-1 after an exciting game. Pilkie pitches in great style.

**June 1st**Enemy offensive in the south apparently not yet held. In the latest reports of fighting, Fritz claims thirty-five thousand prisoners. Numerous civilian refugees pass through Faucquenham, carrying personal belongings in bundles. Many are in a pitiful plight, but there is little sign of them being broken in spirit. They seem resigned to their fate—"C'est la guerre." English papers today are full of the unsavoury Billing and Maud Allan court case.

**June 2nd**German advance down south continues. Enemy reported to be only forty miles from Paris. Situation evidently critical. Canadians, in the British manner, like to tell a tale against themselves, and the following is going the rounds: Currie is reported to have approached Foch and offered to take the Canadian Corps down south to stem the tide of the German invasion. To which Foch replied, "Take that platoon of yours into the woods and amuse yourself as best you can for a while." Needless to remark, there is probably not the least foundation for the yarn.

**June 3rd**A date no Forty-Niner is ever likely to forget, for it was on this date two years ago that the heart and nerve and sinew of the Battalion served their turn long after they were gone, to quote from Kipling, in that bloody battle in the Ypres Salient. Take a stroll in the evening with Pete Livingstone. We climb up the hill behind the village. It is a grand evening, and so clear. Mont des Cats and Cassel can be seen plainly.

**June 4th**Brigade sports held at Ferfav. Earle Hay wins both the 100 yards and the 220.

**June 5th**Ecquedeques, a nearby village where Portuguese troops are billeted, is placed out of bounds to the 7th Brigade. It appears that there was a row the other night between some of the 42nd and a bunch of Portuguese, and this eventually developed into a miniature riot. The Forty-Twas, it goes without saying, gave a good deal more than they got. The trouble apparently started when one of the Jocks knocked a Portuguese down for cruelly abusing a horse.

**June 7th**Baseball game in the afternoon between the 49th and the 42nd. Jordon, of our section, is in the team for the first time. A good game, the Jocks winning 2-0. Spend the evening in the grounds of the YMCA. A dozen or more fellows, including a Portuguese soldier and a Chinese labourer, are throwing a medicine ball around. The Portuguese knocks the Chinese man over with the ball when the latter has his back turned. After picking himself up, the Chinese man, feeling highly insulted, is out for blood. Grabbing a rifle and bayonet from an unsuspecting sentry at the gate a few yards away, he makes for the Portuguese, who shows him a clean pair of heels. The sentry, a Canadian soldier, takes after the two of them. He regains his rifle, gives the Chinese man a good kick in his rear, and sends him back to his camp. And the comedy is over. These Chinese labourers are always getting into trouble, and it seems a mistake to let them have the run of the country.

**June 8th**A new moon and, needless to say, it is not welcome, for it means more night bombing. Am reminded of the Bairnsfather sketch which shows a maiden at her bedroom window gazing at the "same dear moon that shines tonight on Charlie." Charlie, meanwhile, is stringing wire in No Man's Land, and the language he is using, as he looks up at the moon, is neither romantic nor printable. Today's papers indicate that the Americans are now in the thick of the fighting down south.

**June 10th**Division maneuvers are held. The 49th, while proceeding in buses to the battle, take the wrong route, and two-thirds of the Battalion are ignominiously taken prisoners, their captors being the 116th Battalion. It will be some time before we hear the last of this. Maneuvers held today are on a big scale, with tanks operating with the troops.

**June 14th**Brigade wrestling and boxing bouts are held in the evening. Sammy Glew wins a good bout over an RCR man. Hule wins his bout with one of the 42nd. There are a number of French youngsters in the crowd, and when the events are over, the fellows pair them off and put the gloves on them. They know nothing about boxing, but they make up for it in pugnacity and give the troops a good deal of entertainment.

**June 17th**The enemy apparently is now held down south, and today's papers are optimistic over the situation. But the Austrian victories over the Italians make bad reading. Division sports held at St. Hilaire. Forty-Ninth tug-of-war team beats the Forty-Third after a Herculean final pull, which lasts seven minutes and leaves both teams utterly exhausted. Our good friends the Forty-Twas go plumb crazy at our victory. When the 49th prepared the camp for the arrival of the 42nd at Shorncliffe three years ago, we little realized that the friendly gesture would promote a comradeship between the two battalions rivalling the friendship of David and Jonathan. A week or two after the 42nd had arrived at Shorncliffe, I was writing a letter in their well-equipped recreation hut when one of their sergeants came along and told me I would have to leave, as the hut was only for the use of the 42nd. I got up to go, but I was pulled back into my seat by the Forty-Twas present. They then turned on the sergeant and voiced their indignation so strongly that he faded from the scene.

**June 19th**Lacrosse game in the afternoon between the 49th and the Engineers. The Battalion loses after a rough game, the score being 2-1. Lt. Walters, an Olympic Games athlete, is put in charge of all Brigade athletes, fifty-seven in number, who have qualified for the Division sports which are soon to be held.

**June 20th**Italians seem to be holding their ground at last against the Austrian onslaught.

**June 21st**Feed is plentiful these days, and the transport horses are in good shape. Every day a team and limber get a load of green feed from the other side of Lillers. The civilian population has been cleared from the area, and the crops have been deserted and are rotting in the fields.

**June 23rd**Maclean dropped off to sleep in his bunk last night and left the candle burning. It burnt down to the woodwork, which caught fire, and the flames then exploded a clip of cartridges, which had been left near the candle. We awaken at the sound of the explosion and are able to beat out the fire before it really gets going. Mac, being the cause of the rude awakening, comes in for some abuse, but he is unconcerned, except for the fact that someone used his new tunic to beat out the flames. Divisional sports are held at Lingham. The 49th does well, leading all other battalions in the Division.

**June 24th**We are warned to prepare for a move tomorrow. Seems that the 3rd Division is to relieve the 2nd, who are holding the line south of Arras. Will be sorry to leave this pleasant little village. We have had no better or longer rest since landing in France.

**June 25th**The Battalion entrains from Aire, but we of the Transport take the road. Travel west until about four kilometres from St. Pol, and then swing south to St. Michael, which is our destination. Must have travelled well over thirty kilometres today.

**June 26th**On the road again at 8:00 a.m. Pass many battalions on the move. This countryside is well entrenched and wired, so it would seem that a further push from Fritz is expected. Pass several aerodromes and one tankdrome. Reach Halbarcq about 3:00 p.m. and find the Battalion awaiting us there.

**June 27th**Up early, and we are on the road once more by 8:00 a.m. Travel by way of Wanquetin. Transport then leaves the Battalion. In the late afternoon, we camp about a kilometre from Monchiet. Take over lines from the 21st Battalion, and poor lines they are. In addition, we are at an inconvenient distance from both the Battalion and the trenches, the latter being fourteen kilometres distant. It is stated that a trip up the line from here with rations takes the entire night. A welcome mail, and a big one, awaits us on arrival at the camp. The most confirmed army grouser can hardly have any kick at the way army mail is handled. If the entire army is on the march, with battalions moving in all directions, every man's mail will be waiting for him at the close of the day. Truly a triumph of organization.

**June 28th**Rustle canvas cover and some old lumber from a nearby deserted artillery camp and spend the morning with Killips fixing up a shack, also shelter for hay and oats. Battalion moves up the line and takes over from the 31st. A number of officers and men, suffering from flu, remain behind.

J**July 1st**Flu epidemic continues. Limbers going up the line at night are loading with sick men on their return. There has been no rain for weeks, and the dust and parched condition of the countryside may have something to do with the sickness. Corps sports are held today, and we hear that the 49th does not show up particularly well. The 49th tug-of-war team gets beaten by the 29th Battalion.

**July 4th**Fritzie planes are over in the early hours of the morning. Some bombs are dropped in our vicinity, but no damage is done. Spend evening with Frank Pilkie, one of the flu victims, helping him learn the Morse code on the buzzer.

**July 6th**The "Daily Mail" this morning says that American soldiers in Europe now number over a million, and that they are crossing the Atlantic at the rate of over a quarter of a million a month. So Canadians are hardly justified now in singing "They won’t be over (till it’s over, over here." Battalion comes out of the line and goes into billets at Bretencourt. Not a single casualty during the trip.

**July 7th**A bunch of us spend the afternoon taking in the sports at the nearby camp of an Imperial Labour battalion. Two clowns, one dressed as a woman, prove so entertaining that one guesses them to be ex-professionals. Some of the 49th star athletes compete in the open events and win several prizes.

**July 7th**A day of very welcome rain, which will help the crops a lot in this district. Mail brings me a letter from home. Seems that the explosion in the Midlands, mentioned in the papers recently, took place at Derby.

**July 13th**Battalion is to return to the trenches tomorrow. Hear that a direct hit was made yesterday on Division Headquarters, but casualties are reported light. Word comes from the line that Fritz pulled off a raid the other night against the 116th and got away with several prisoners.

**July 16th**The limbers that took the rations up the line last night brought back the bodies of two Battalion men killed the day before. One had been filled at the ration dump. A casualty amongst the transport animals last night, Napoleon, the big black mule, being hit in the shoulder while on a trip up the line. In the evening, I go over to Brigade post office and have a gossip with Foster, who used to be with the Sigs. Enemy planes over our area at night, and are greeted with heavy machine-gun fire. Only one bomb dropped close enough to disturb us.

**July 18th**Gas masks are worn by everyone for half an hour in the morning in order that we may feel accustomed to them. A Divisional Train man passing through our lines tells us that thirty-seven horses were killed last night during the bombing raid; we get word of a French success down south. Walk over to Corps Hospital on Arras Road in the evening to look at the bulletin. It reads "17,000 prisoners and 300 guns taken by the French." On my way back, pass a big ammunition dump only about 400 yards from the hospital, and this same dump is not so far from another hospital in nearby Gouey. Some strange things are done all right in this man’s army.

**July 19th**We hear of the looting of Arras by the 1st and 2nd Canadian Divisions, the city having been hurriedly evacuated by the civilian population after heavy shell fire. The troops apparently found the cellars well stocked and had the time of their lives. Amongst the places looted was a bank, and the tale is told that a pay parade was staged outside it, the paymaster being a plastered private who sat at a table in the street and handed out ten franc bills to a long line-up of hilarious soldiers. He is stated to have bawled them out good and plenty if he did not get a proper salute. All this is nothing to the credit of the two divisions concerned, but after all they only helped themselves to what would probably have been destroyed by shell fire. Furthermore, loot has always been regarded as a sort of perquisite of the British soldier—for confirmation, read Kipling’s barrack-room ballad "Loot." A Fritz plane over our lines at night. Our searchlights get trained on it but they are unable to hold it long enough for one of our planes to get on its tail.

**July 20th, 1918**Much cheered by the news of the French victories to the south. They are stated to have captured 27,000 prisoners and 400 guns in two days’ fighting. We get an addition to the Transport—a team of mules and a G.S. wagon from Col. Harstone’s outfit. A Fritz plane is over our lines at night, and our searchlights get onto it and hold it for some time. No bombs dropped.

**July 22nd**Tony Peterson comes back from his two months’ shoeing course at Abbeville. He states the course was nothing in the nature of a “rest,” as it was intended to be, for the town was bombed repeatedly at night. A heavy bombardment up the line around midnight, and it is reported that the Guards, who are on our right, are going over on a raid.

**July 23rd**Battalion is to come out of the line tonight. Expecting an early move from this front. All kinds of rumors going around. A solitary shell drops near our lines but does no damage. In the evening, a nearby observation balloon is shot down by a Fritz plane. The two observers escape in their parachutes.

**July 25th**A short move to Berneville, about five kilometers distant. Raining, which is nothing new for moving day.

**July 26th**Runner from Brigade in the morning brings orders for another move. 1st Battalion takes over from us, and we are on the road at 12:20 p.m. We start on the dot as usual. A large number of battalions are on the march these days, and the timing of their movements is almost perfect. An observer on some crossroads could see battalions coming and going all day long, yet never clashing. Open lines await us at Agnes-les-Duisans. There have been heavy showers throughout the day, and the camp is a quagmire. All the brigade transport sections are here. Billets for the section are in the town, but Heck McKenzie and I fix up a bivvy and remain in the lines. If we did not, the hay and oats would be swiped by drivers who hate to see their horses looking hungry. Hear that Jimmy Collins has left the Sigs for a training course in the Royal Air Service.

**July 28th**The Iron Duke lines us up in the afternoon and gives us a bit of a lecture—all officers have their nicknames, and Lt. Ottewell of our section is known as the Iron Duke, though he would not appear to bear much facial resemblance to the victor of Waterloo. It seems that the Divisional General recently made the comment that discipline in the 3rd Division was not what it should be.

**July 29th, 1918**A fine warm day, and we are glad to see the camp dry up a bit. More good news from the south, where it is evident that Fritzie, while not actually on the run, is retiring on a big scale. Instructions received for limbers to be packed in readiness for an early move tomorrow.

**July 30th**Reveille for the section at 3:30 a.m., but the battalion does not leave until 6:00 a.m. We travel by way of Berneville and Gouay Saulty. Pass through a village full of American soldiers who greet us with cries of “How’s she going, Bo?” As the sun gets up, it becomes cruelly hot for marching with full packs. There is a good deal of grousing about the full packs, as other battalions in the division are in light marching order. It is a long march, over thirty kilometres, and quite a number of men fall out before our destination, Le Souich, is reached. Transport lines in an old orchard.

**July 31st**Rude awakening shortly after midnight with orders that the battalion is to entrain without delay. Half of the transport proceeds with the battalion. The battalion pulls out in the darkness with the band in the van. The men have had little sleep after yesterday’s hard march, but they are in high spirits, for there is a general air of expectancy and a feeling that greater things are in the offing. As they pass the barn where we are billeted, they are lustily singing the old favourites—a usual mixture of the obscene and the sentimental—and making more noise than this old village has known for many a day. On an occasion such as this, a regimental band, with its soul-stirring music, means more than words can express.

It is a pleasant, lazy day for those of us of the transport who stay behind. In the morning, as Len Wescott and I are passing the billets, the good people ask us in for a cup of coffee. They speak English and are high in their praise of the American soldiers who are in the village. In the evening, Canadians and Americans have an impromptu sing-song outside the barn. Americans give us their version, and we give ours, of *If You Want to Find the General,* with its umpteen verses dealing with every rank. The sergeant-major, when found, was down in a deep dugout; the sergeant, of course, was drinking the private’s rum; the cook was washing his feet in the soup—“We saw him, we saw him, etc.” The only one with any sense of duty apparently was the private who was “hanging on the old barbed wire.”

The sing-song is interrupted as the 9th Canadian Brigade passes through the village. They are travelling in lorries, and the crowd outside the barn greets each lorry with a great cheer. In the usual course of events, a lorry of soldiers passing by would attract little attention, but there is excitement in the air tonight. In late evening, we get orders to move, and at 11:00 p.m. we pull out. Our destination is Montrelet. There is a spare saddle horse, Buster, and I get a ride.

**August 1st, 1918**March through the night by way of Bouquemaison, Doullens, and Candas. The usually good staff work is not in evidence today, as in places the traffic is badly tied up. Get to Montrelet about 8:00 a.m. This is familiar country, for we were here in September 1916. After we have got the horses fixed up, we lie down and sleep in the shade of the limbers. Our camp is in a thick wood. It is very evident that every precaution is being taken to prevent the enemy from knowing that the Canadian Corps is on the move south. Our marching apparently has to be done at night as much as possible. Load up the limbers shortly before midnight, and at 12:30 a.m., we are on the road once more. The transport sections of two brigades, the 7th and 9th, are in the convoy.

**August 2nd, 1918**A hot, sultry night. As dawn breaks, it starts to rain heavily, and it is still raining a couple of hours later as we camp in a wood. Lie down in our sodden clothes under the limbers and get what sleep we can. Take to the road again at 8:00 p.m. A fine evening.

**August 3rd, 1918**A hard night’s march by men and horses who were weary when they set out. On more than one occasion, notice a driver fast asleep on his horse, swaying to and fro in the saddle and waking up now and then with a start. On every short rest, men flop down on the wet and muddy grass by the side of the road and go fast asleep. On one occasion, I get left behind—nobody noticed my slumbering form in the pitch darkness. When I awake, I find no trace of the entire convoy. Feeling somewhat foolish, I get to my feet and make my way along the deserted road. Come to a four-cross road as the dawn is breaking and follow the wheel marks of the limbers. Shortly afterward, see Len riding towards me with a spare saddle horse. He had noticed my absence, guessed what had happened, and had been detailed to ride back and look for me.

We journey about three miles before catching up to the convoy. As we ride, we pass several tanks lumbering along. Looks as though there is dirty work ahead, all right. Transport gets into Sains-en-Amiénois shortly after dawn and finds the battalion in camp here. Good billets await us, for the town has suffered little from shell fire and is in the same condition as when hurriedly evacuated by the civilian population last spring. Instructions received that no “Canada” badges are to be worn—it is evident that every precaution is being taken to keep the presence of the Canadian Corps in this area a close secret. Sleep most of the day, and the night as well, to make up for the hours we’ve lost during the past four days.

**August 4th, 1918**It appears that we are now in a French army corps and we come into contact with a lot of French soldiers. The Poilus have no bright buttons or shining harness to give their positions away to the enemy. The R.C.R.s, in our own brigade, with their big shining hat badges, must look, while on the march, like a great gleaming snake to distant enemy balloon observers.

The old British die-hard generals could learn a thing or two all right from the French. Besides being less conspicuous on the march, the Poilu, with no shining or polishing to do, saves himself a lot of senseless labour, to say nothing of having to lug the cleaning paraphernalia around in packs as we do—and heaven knows our packs are heavy enough as it is. The French wartime army quite rightly cares naught for outward appearance if it in any way infringes on efficiency. They also know the utter fallacy of the British diehards’ argument that a soldier on active service has got to shine up in order to keep his self-respect. Is the Australian soldier one whit the poorer fighter because he has no buttons to shine?

Good news reaches us from the south where it is evident that Fritzie is retreating on a big scale. The old town crier has the time of his life as he marches through the streets, beating his drum fit to burst it and shouting out the good news. The French soldiers and the few remaining civilians in the place are excited and happy, and there is a feeling that further successes are in store. The Colonel of the 42nd is killed today. With him at the time was Major Weaver of our battalion, and we hear he is slightly wounded. All through the night, heavy traffic, including a lot of artillery, rumbles through the town.

**August 5th, 1918**Transport loses a saddle horse, Lucas. He broke loose during the night and has disappeared—probably by now has been snaffled by some outfit on the move. Hear that the battalion is to move up to the line tomorrow. Am on picket duty at night. Teams out all night, and they don’t get back till dawn. Drivers say roads are congested with traffic.

**August 6th, 1918**Battalion leaves for the line, with the band playing and everybody happy. They are to spend a day and night in Boves Wood and then move up into the line, taking over a section from the Aussies. Six packers with their horses and mules leave the transport section and join the divisional train.

**August 7th, 1918**Transport sets out at 2 p.m. Keep to the roads in the valleys and wooded areas as much as possible. It is dark when we pitch our camp in Boves Wood. No light of any description is allowed, and there is considerable confusion as we move around in the Stygian darkness. Some wag with a perverted sense of humour does not improve matters by shouting “Mind the old well.” Stafford gets thrown and badly trampled on by his team. We eventually get settled down for the night.

**August 8th, 1918**The happiest day we’ve had in France. Fritzie is on the run at last, and no mistake about it. In the early morning, we hear that an attack has been made on a wide front by four army corps—British, Canadian, Australian, and French, the Canadians and Australians being in the centre. Fritz is legging it so fast that the cavalry is now in action after him. Transport sets out at 2:00 p.m. in an effort to catch up to the battalion.

After we pass through Boves, we meet German prisoners in their hundreds coming down the road. Many are being used as stretcher bearers. At Doinart, where the enemy’s front line was yesterday, there are numerous German dead on the ground. Their pockets have been emptied, and various articles of no value strew the ground. Near one of the bodies is a photograph. I pick it up—it is a snap of the dead man with his wife and three youngsters.

Further along the road is a field dressing station. Amongst the wounded is Pat Cunningham of the Scouts, and he is in a bad way. Lying alongside him is a wounded German soldier. The Heinie does not appear to be badly hurt, but he squeals and groans loudly as his wound is being dressed—until he is told roughly by our men to shut up. In marked contrast, a few feet away, is a young German officer. He has been peppered all over by shrapnel and looks as though most of the blood has been drained out of him. As soon as one wound is attended to, he points out another. Never a groan or a moan escapes him, and tightly compressed lips are the only evidence of the pain he is so stolidly enduring.

He is wearing a hexagon-shaped wristwatch. One of the first-aid men takes it off and pockets it, remarking, a little shamefacedly, that if he does not take it, someone else will. About a mile further down the road, we halt for a while near a barbed wire enclosure containing several hundred prisoners. Amongst them is a group of a dozen or more officers. They are trying to look dignified in their cage and are not succeeding very well. In the centre of the group is an officer of high rank. He calls a batman to him and talks to the man as though he were dirt.

As we continue further up the line, we come upon a long-range German gun, captured by the 49th early in the day. Some of the company men soon figure out how everything works and then turn the gun around, blazing away towards enemy territory. They are having the time of their lives until some artillery fellows, under an officer, come along and take it over from them.

As we march, it is hard to realize we are going over a battlefield. The whole countryside is flat and green, with no signs of war save an occasional shell hole and a dead German lying on the grass. In one little deserted hamlet, we come upon a well, with a note nailed to it stating that the water must not be used until tested, as it may have been poisoned by the enemy. But our water bottles are empty, so we take a chance and have a drink, figuring that Fritzie left in such a hurry that he had no time to think about poisoning wells.

We catch up to the battalion at dusk after travelling all day. It seems the 49th went far beyond where they were supposed to go today, and when the C.M.R.s went through us, they said we had hogged their objective. They then continued gaily on their way to take objectives several miles in advance of the original plan.

Casualties today have been light. Hear with much regret that Blondie Hammond is among the killed. It is tough on Blondie having to turn in his checks now after going through so much. In the early days, I was in the same platoon as Blondie and got to know him well. One little incident concerning him comes vividly to mind as I write. It was on May 1st, 1916, when Fritz came over on us in the Salient, that Blondie found himself the sole survivor in his bay. There were four of us in the next bay, and we suddenly saw Blondie’s head appear round the corner. And what mixed emotions flooded his face as he yelled, “Come along, some of you guys! D’you want me to hold this ... bay all by myself?”

It was Blondie who remarked one night in the tent at Kemmel that people in Europe were a hundred years behind the times—“except when it came to ways and means of killing each other, and then they were a thousand years ahead of us.”

We camp for the night in a thick wood. The order for no lights is still in force, and we again experience no little difficulty in fixing up the horses and getting our own needs attended to. But everybody is happy, and the utmost good humour prevails. Fritz is on the run, and today perhaps is the beginning of the end.

**August 9th, 1918**Spend the morning in eager talk with the company men about yesterday’s great victory. Hear many a tale that stirs the blood. The 43rd Battalion was on our immediate left, and it is told how a kiltie piper stood on the leading tank and played the troops into action. They say he was as gallant a figure as eyes could ever wish to look on.

Husky Leddingham gives us a graphic and entertaining account of the day’s fighting. Amongst other things, he tells us of a German who was killed in a dugout by one of the company men after he had surrendered. Husky has probably sent as many Fritzies to their happy hunting grounds as any man in the 49th, but he does not like to see a prisoner killed in cold blood. He goes on to say that the company man in question was killed in the fighting later in the day, and Husky regards his death in the light of just retribution. But knowing the company man myself, I am inclined to think that Husky is mistaken regarding the killing of the unarmed prisoner—there may perhaps have been some treacherous move on his part.

Casualties of the 49th yesterday amounted to 55—10 men killed and 45 wounded. Extraordinary light, considering that the battalion advanced nine kilometres and made a great haul in prisoners and guns. It is evident that the attack was a complete surprise to the enemy. A German-American captured yesterday proved more voluble than most prisoners, and he is reported to have stated that they did not have the least inkling that an attack was going to be launched.

Truly a great bit of staff work—to transfer the entire Canadian Corps down to this front without Fritz knowing anything about it. It is stated that while the Corps was being transferred south, a small body of Canadian soldiers was sent up north on the Ypres front. There they staged a raid and took good care to leave evidence identifying themselves, in order to fool the German staff.

About noon, we get a “stand-to,” and the battalion moves off. Transport section remains behind for a time, but we soon get our marching orders and before long rejoin the battalion, which we find camped in a wood by the side of the Amiens-Noyon Road. This highway is heavily congested with traffic, many of the battalions on the march being Imperials.

Just before dusk, the battalion falls in again. Transport remains in camp. We see two observation balloons brought down in flames—one German and one of ours. A lot of bombing in the early hours of the night, but nothing is dumped near us.

**August 10th, 1918**Hear that the 7th Brigade packers have been badly cut up in the fighting of the past two days, the 49th packers having only two mules left. We set off early to rejoin the battalion, but progress is slow on account of the heavy traffic along the Amiens-Noyon Road. Eventually, we leave the road and cut across country to Le Quesnel. Fix up our horse lines in a big orchard, with limbers all hidden under the trees as far as possible. The battalion is camped about half a mile away.

A Fritzie airman peppers the Q.M. stores in the afternoon, and George Linsay gets a good Blighty. Take a stroll in the evening through a nearby wood, which was captured by the C.M.R.s yesterday morning. They lost heavily in the taking of it, and their dead are still lying on the ground. Their pockets have been turned inside out, which appears ghoulish on the face of it. On the other hand, there is no object in leaving money on a dead man—furthermore, their little personal effects may have been taken with the intent of turning them in for disposal to their next of kin.

On the outside of the wood is a dead German machine-gunner. He had evidently been firing over the trunk of a fallen tree. There is a big pile of empty cartridges by his side, and no doubt it was the raking fire from his machine gun that killed the advancing C.M.R.s. The German, a dark, husky young giant, has been killed by a bayonet stab through the back of the neck. One does not need much imagination to visualize what happened: a C.M.R. emerges from the wood, on one of the flanks, unnoticed by the German whose interest is centered on his gun. A bullet may only wound the German, and he has a spitting machine gun in his hands which could easily be turned on his attacker. So the C.M.R. comes up behind the man and kills him with his bayonet.

There are no other German dead around there, and it would appear that this machine-gunner had held up the advance single-handed, knowing full well what his ultimate fate must be. Here lies a brave man—killed by one no less brave.

A big forage dump was among the supplies captured yesterday, and our horses are now getting all the hay they want. There was no grain at the dump, and Fritzie’s poor brutes of horses apparently have to get along on a hay diet. Hundreds of cases of bottled soda water were also found at the dump, and fellows filled up their water bottles with it. There was also a great stack of German boots, with the hair still on the leather of the uppers. Some of the men kicked off their boots and substituted the Heinie ones—an action they will probably regret, as the boots appear to be of poor quality.

Since the 8th, the Canadians alone are reported to have taken more than 9,000 prisoners. The success of the fighting is due, from all accounts, in no small measure to the tanks. For two years they have been a doubtful asset—in Passchendaele mud they were an absolute flop—but everyone says they have been great these last three days. The cavalry too has come into its own at last. The lancers were in action on the 8th, and more than one fleeting German heard the thunder of hoofs behind him that day and felt the cold steel between his shoulder blades. The lance no doubt has seen its day and has little place in modern warfare, but it reigned supreme for a few fleeting moments on the 8th.

**August 11th, 1918**Grand weather continues, which is all in favour of our big offensive. Many rumours as to the fighting on the Western Front. As usual, we have to rely on a newspaper for authentic information. The only paper available is a *Daily Mail* dated the 9th, and that naturally only deals with the first phase of the fighting.

The battalion moves up to Falies, but we of the Transport remain where we are. Ninth Brigade passes our horse lines on their way up the line to relieve the 32nd Division Imperials, who are reported to have been badly cut up.

As soon as it gets dark, Fritzie’s hummingbirds are over our lines. Several bombs are dropped in the near vicinity, and machine-gun bullets whistle through the trees of the orchard. A nerve-wracking night, but no casualties result.

**August 12th, 1918**Spend the day digging pits for the horses and trenches for ourselves, aided by a fatigue party. After the pits are dug, the next job is to get the horses into them. They refuse to be led down, even when blindfolded. Gilbert hits on the expedient of running them around blindfolded and then taking them, while still at a fast trot, down the steep dip into the pits. “Gibbie” enjoys himself thoroughly, though more than one horse nearly falls on top of him. Once they have been down, they are not averse to going down again.

Mike Dempsey, sergeant of the Sigs, is down in the transport lines in the evening. He tells us he is booked for Canada as an instructor. Neville Jones also drops by the lines. He tells us how young Gange, who, being under eighteen, had been sent down to the Base some time ago, felt he just could not remain away from the battalion when he heard of the fighting on the 8th. So he broke out of camp and jumped lorries all the way until he eventually rejoined the Sigs. Can’t imagine a sixteen-year-old Fritzie youngster doing that.

Yesterday’s paper says that 30,900 prisoners have been taken in the recent fighting. It also states that the Canadians established a record for the Western Front by advancing nine miles on the 8th. German bombing planes are over again at night, and we are glad of the trenches and pits we have dug.

**August 13th, 1918**Ration teams returning from the line last night bring word that the battalion had five men killed yesterday. From all accounts, Fritz has fallen back on the trenches behind the wire of the 1916 line.

In the morning, see seven German planes flying overhead. As we are watching them, they are attacked by a solitary and impudent British fighter who swoops down out of the blue and proceeds to shoot it out with them. In spite of the seven-to-one odds, he succeeds in downing a Fritzie before he is shot down himself. He narrowly misses our horse lines, and his plane is badly damaged as it hits the ground. He is badly bruised and has a bullet wound in his shoulder, but he is grinning as he is helped out of the plane.

Jimmy Durrell, who was on a burial party last night, tells us that amongst those they buried were the members of a tank crew. Their bodies were charred beyond recognition, for a direct hit had set the tank on fire and the crew had been trapped inside it.

A draft from Etaples arrives for the battalion. It includes Gauvin, who states he is glad to get away from Etaples, the place having been bombed every night of late.

**August 14th, 1918**An air fight takes place between about a dozen of our planes and an equal number of the enemy. The honours are even, as two of ours and two of theirs are shot down. Hear that the 49th and the Princess Pats made a further advance today and secured a few prisoners.

French papers report that 40,000 prisoners and 700 guns have been taken in the fighting of the past week, of which the Canadians' bag is 9,000 prisoners and 150 guns. Bombing as usual at night.

**August 15th, 1918**Down in the transport, we have only vague news of how the battalion has been faring up the line these last two or three days. But we hear today that the boys took part in the capture of Parvillers, which was effected by the 7th Brigade. A bunch of prisoners and a few machine guns were taken at the same time. The battalion is to come out of the line tonight.

**August 16th, 1918**

Get warned at short notice for a move. Set out at 4:00 p.m. Travelling is pleasant in the cool of the day. Pass a tank which has been destroyed by a direct hit—that appears to have been the fate of a number of them. Captured German supplies are in evidence everywhere—ammunition, guns, lorries, etc. Camp in Valley Woods, which we reach just before dark. No enemy planes overhead, and we are glad to get a sound sleep.

**August 17th, 1918**The battalion is credited with the capture of more than 300 Heinies, 12 guns, and over fifty machine guns in the fighting from August 8th to 15th. Not too dusty for men who knew nought about the art of war two or three years ago. Our casualties in the same period were 21 killed and 97 wounded.

A big and welcome Canadian mail arrives. Of all the bugle calls, there is none more popular than "Letter from lousy Lou, boys; letter from lousy Lou." In the evening, take a stroll with Tom James. Look over some enemy gun pits and see where several of our shells have made direct hits. Afterwards, go over to an old chateau on the other side of the Roye-Amiens Road. This chateau, which was captured by the French, must have been the scene of heavy fighting, for although burial parties have been busy, there are still some German dead lying around. They have been dead for more than a week—and this is midsummer.

**August 18th, 1918**A welcome shower of rain in the morning. It clears up later as the 7th Brigade marches past President Poincaré, General Haig, and other notables. In the evening, walk over to Villers-aux-Érables and see the great array of captured guns, machine guns, trench mortars, and material lined up near the Roye-Amiens Road. The guns must number about fifty, many of them badly crippled. Amongst them are three old French guns dated 1878. These forty-year-old guns apparently had been used by the French, and again by the Germans after they had captured them.

On turning in after "Lights Out," the stillness of the night is broken by a cornet player rendering song after song which the troops love so well. After each solo, the woods resound with applause and shouts of "Encore." That cornet player, whoever he is, has stirred up memories of home and loved ones, and "God bless him," say we all—if not in actual words, at least in thought.

This little incident, somehow or other, brings to mind Bret Harte’s poem, which describes a group of rough miners around a campfire in ’49, and goes on to relate how one of their number produces his Dickens and reads aloud, to the hushed audience, of Little Nell wandering through English meadows.

**August 19th, 1918**The battalion entrains at 9:00 p.m. for an unknown destination. We of the Transport take the road. Travel through Hangard, which has been badly battered by shell fire. We are obviously headed in the direction of Amiens, for we are never far from the Roye-Amiens Road. Get to the outskirts of Amiens at 2:00 a.m. and camp in an open field.

**August 20th**–Sleep in until noon. After break- fast (or dinner) a bunch of us go down to a nearby pleasure lake and have a great swim in the cool clear water. Rennie James surprises all and sundry by his aquatic skill. Dives from the roof of a sum- mer house, at risk of his ruddy neck, for the buliding has been hit by a shell and it quivers and shakes under his weight. On the road again at 9:00 p.m. Keep to the outskirts of Amiens and we are disap- pointed at not getting a glimpse of the cathedral. Travel through Flesselles, Havernas, Canaples, Montrelet and reach Bonneville, where we camp, as the dawn breaks. It has been a good march, under an almost full moon. No word yet as to when we connect up with the battalion. '

**August 21st–**After breakfast it gets very hot as hot a day as any we have had this summer. There are some good trees however on our camping ground and we lie in the shade and get a few hours sleep. On the march again at 4:30 p.m. Our road goes through Candas, which is full of Americans, and Doullens. Get news of the successful British drive towards Bapaume and we meet numerous ambulances full of men who have been wounded in the engagement. The slight cases are much elated at the way the day has gone. Also hear rumours of a French success near Soissons. We are held up several times on the road and we do not reach Iverguy, our destination, until midnight. Glad to find the battalion here, for we may get a chance now to catch up with the sleep we've lost the last couple of days.

**August 22nd–**Another hot day. Drop into estaminet in early evening. There 'is a piano in the place and little Twist is at the keys looking more like a cherubic choir boy than the tough little soldier that he is. He is playing the old favourites and the troops are singing them lustily. Some of the fellows are half tight and there are loud de- mands for "She married a man, etc." and other bawdy songs; but there are two girls: waiting on the tables and, on their account. Twist refuses the de- mands of the Bacchanalians. The girls, two buxom wenches, have probably heard the songs before but Twist makes up his mind they are not going to hear them as long as he is at the ivories. A little scene this that will remain in the memory Twist laughingly and goodnaturedly holding the fort of virtue against the licentious soldiery.

At 9:00 p.m. the battalion gets a sudden order to move. Limbers are hurriedly loaded any old way which makes the driver.-, swear, for an ill- balanced limber is hard on the horses and we are on the road in quick time. The entire brigade travels together. It is a forced march and quite a number of fellows, who have been over imbibing in the estaminets, find the pace too hot and they fall out. As we march .through the night we constantly hear our bombing planes overhead on their way to visit Fritzie. It is a full moon and a great night for dropping eggs. We journey through Magnicourt and eventually reach Izel-les-Hameau where we camp. It has been a hard march and no one will need rocking to sleep to-night.

**August 23rd–**Sleep in until noon. Pull out of Izel-les-Hameau at 6:00 p.m. Skies are overcast and there is a heavy shower shortly after we have started. Journey through Habarcq and soon hit the Arras-St. Pol main road. Get to our destination, Auzm St. Aubin, after a hard march Take over some old artillery lines. There are some heavy guns near our camp, so we can expect night bombing.

August 24th Fritz was over last night all right but nothing was dropped close to our lines. Our machine-guns, firing from the ground, kicked up quite a racket and did us out of a good deal of sleep. There were so many of them, and the firing was so continuous, that they would appear to be putting up a barrage of machine-gun bullets. Spend day lazily in Auzin St. Aubin. Read in the papers of the announcement that in future decora- tions will only be awarded for gallantry under fire an order that the troops welcome. We have all heard of the baker down at the Base who was awarded the D.C.M. for working umpteen hours at a stretch when bread was urgently needed (or should it be kneaded). No doubt that baker did a good bit of work but any front line man has endured more fatigue, again and again, and under shell fire too. A long spell of bread baking would have looked pretty cushy to us when we were pack- ing supplies for the engineers along the V.C. Road at Kemmel in '15. Green troops we were then and night after night the engineers worked us to the point of exhaustion.

August 25th–Hear that two German planes were brought down last night near Agnez-les-Duis- sans. Battalion goes up the line at 7:00 p.m. They are to go over the bags to-morrow. A great deal of traffic on the road that runs by our horse lines. Half a dozen prisoners pass by, under escort of mounted guards with drawn swords. There can be only one reason for such a formidable escort to protect the prisoners from civilians. No one ever heard of a Fritzie prisoner attempting to escape, at least not in the vicinity of the trenches. Remember seeing, on the Albert Road in '16, about a hundred prisoners in charge of one jaunty youngster.

**August 26th–**A heavy barrage opens up at 3 :00 a.m. when the C.M.R's. go over the top. Vague rumours reach us throughout the day but we are unable to get any definite news of what is happen- ing up the line. In evening our section gets orders to move and we take the road through St. Catherine and Arras. Camp just on the other side of the latter city. Late at night we hear what has been happening during the day. A big advance has been made, and casualties have not been heavy. Fritz apparently was caught in the act of evacuat- ing' the line. Mouchy captured by the C.M.R's. The Princess Pats, caught in machine-gun fire, apparently suffered more than any other unit. Our sec- tion officer, Lt. Ottewell, reported among the wounded had the bad luck to step on a trap-mine.

**August 27th–**Am on picket duty from 2:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. Fritz is shelling the road behind us with some heavy stuff and some chunks of shrapnel land in our lines. Ration party return from up the line as the dawn is breaking. Shelling has been heavy and, now the danger is past, they give a highly entertaining account of it. They bring word that the battalion's casualties yesterday amounted to twenty-nine killed and wounded, which is a good deal lighter than expected. Before I go off duty see a plane brought down in flames it is a considerable distance away and it. is hard to say whether it is one of our or theirs. Later in the day Hec McKenzie and I rustle up corrugated iron and rig up a shed for the feed.

**August 28th–**Four prisoners are held at our lines for a couple of hours or so. They understand a little English and we talk with them. One of them is just off the Russian front and he shows us various snaps taken there. One of these snaps is of a group of German soldiers and Russian peasants and children all mixed up together and looking happy enough. When we tell these prisoners there' are a million and a half American soldiers in France they refuse to believe us and obviously think we are kidding them. One of them, a comical little fellow, gives a realistic description of the intensity of our barrage. "Bang, bang, bang, bang," he shouts, and then ducks under a limber. Jack Carmichael comes down from the line and he tells us that "C" and "D" companies went over the top and got their objectives after quite a bit of fighting. Numerous prisoners captured and a number of machine-guns. Battalion is to come out tonight.

**August 29th–**Battalion's casualties in recent fighting have not been severe and quite disproportionate to the success gained. Another bunch of prisoners, eight in number, come down to our lines. They are Prussians, and most of them big fellows. We are having breakfast and for a time we ignore their hungry looks, but it is obvious that they are half starved and have likely had nothing to eat for perhaps a whole day or more so we let them have some of our own slim rations, and very grateful the poor devils are. In afternoon we pack up and march through Arras in order to join the battalion. The city has been shelled a lot but much of it is still standing. Meet 4th Canadian Division moving up to the line, also many Imperials. Find battalion billeted on other side of Arras. Pitch our camp in open field. We are quite reconciled now to our happy home being an open field. Lt. McCauley becomes officer of our section a most popular appointment. Sorry to hear that Tony Breedon is among the killed.

**August 31st–**The wind is blowing direct to the German lines to-day and our propaganda balloons can be seen floating over there with their loads of leaflets. There is something the matter with one of them and it falls into our camp. The leaflets appear to be well got up and the sort of thing that a German soldier might fall for. At noon we get sudden moving order. Limbers are hurriedly loaded and everything is in readiness and then the move is cancelled. It's a great old army all right. In evening- take a walk into Arras and listen to the R.C.R. band playing in the open square. The battered Town Hall is on one side of the square and. some diversion is caused when a pile of masonry falls from the building with a resounding crash. Fortunately no casualties result. Vibration caused by the music quite possibly caused the tottering masonry to topple over, the R.C.R. bandsmen thus emulating, in a lesser degree, the feat of the trumpeters at beseiged Jericho.

After the band concert visit the ruined Cathedral. There is enough of it still standing for one to realize what a magnificent building it must once have been. Arras in peace time must have been a beautiful city, and the wrecked buildings everywhere serve to intensify one's hatred of war. On returning along the road to camp numerous ambulances loaded with wounded men pass me. It is evident that severe fighting is still going on up the line.

**September 1st**–Another order to move, and it is not cancelled this time. Get to Agnez-les-Duisans our destination, about noon. Billeted in large barn. Attend lecture in evening in Church Army Hut.

The speaker, a Y.M.C.A. chaplain, predicts an early end to the war. At one stage of his speech he says he feels no ill will towards the German private soldier, a remark which, significantly, is greeted with applause by the soldier audience. But he goes on to condemn both German soldiers and civilians for being such dupes and sheep. A movie show- follows. The main film, a poor affair sticky with false sentiment, is burlesqued by the audience and a good time is had by all. Two or three years active service make's men wondrously sophisticated had these same lads, now burlesqueing the film. remained on the farms and in the lumber camps they would probably have been deeply moved, and perhaps genuinely distressed, by the sad plight of the heroine.

Fellows are in reminiscent mood after "Lights Out" has gone and the talk continues well into the night after we have settled down in the straw of the big barn. Amongst the yarns told is of the time Tony Peterson got stuck in a mud-hole with his team of blacks, it was back in '15 shortly after the. battalion reached France. Tony was pretty mad, for it was a real dirty night with the rain pel- ting down, and well he wasn't exactly saying his prayers. At that moment a padre (not ours) chanced to come along. Now, the average padre in France was a broadminded sort of fellow, with an understanding of the frailty of human nature, and, under the circumstances he would have continued on his way, perhaps whistling softly as he did so. But not so this padre. He went up to Tony and told him that the language he was using was not, helping things one little bit. Whether Tony recognized the speaker as a padre is a debatable point it was night as has already been related. But there is no uncertainty as to what Tony did; he turned on him with a fierce "Bless you, Buckley!" whereupon the padre faded quietly away into the night.

**September 2nd–**Battalion gets paid and is just about to step out and celebrate when we get a "stand-to." Shortly after we set out towards the line. Word of a successful offensive reaches us and this is confirmed, as we march through Arras, by German prisoners we meet. One batch alone must have totalled fifteen hundred. We camp near the lines we occupied four days ago. Get a "Daily Mail" in evening and read of the capture of Mt. St. Quentin and Kemmel Hill from the enemy. Capture of Perronne also reported. Things must be going our way all right. See German plane dive down on a nearby observation balloon. Occupants take to their parachutes. Fritz misses balloon with his inflammatory bullets and is about to turn round and have another shot at it when one of our machines gets on his tail and chases him back to his lines.

**September 3rd–**Hard to know exactly what is happening up the line but what news we do get is soon. Drivers who return from Arras report seeing a batch of 2,500 German prisoners being escorted through the city. Rumoured that the battalion is to go up the line to-morrow.

**September 4th**–Read in the "Daily Mail" how Canadians have smashed through the Hindenburg Line. Strange that one has to get a newspaper to know what is happening on your own front. It must have been the work of the 1st and 4th Cana- dian Divisions. In afternoon we move up nearer the line, going through Mouchy and then past Mouchy Hill. Ground is badly chewed up every- where and the fighting must have been heavy. Numerous dead are to be seen, Heinies being a good deal more numerous than our own. Burial parties must be having a busy time of it and apparently have a lot of catching up to do. Pitch camp on South side of Vis-en-Artois. Near the camp, about fifty yards from the watertroughs, are more than a hundred of our dead awaiting burial. They have been placed in four rows and are lying there un- covered. The sight of more than a hundred corpses, some terribly mangled, might have unnerved us on first landing in France; but not so now for we have grown accustomed to looking on the dead. Have been. inarching in a pail- of new boots and it is with considerable relief that I kick them off at night.

**September 5th**–Our camp was shelled last night so we spend day digging ourselves in. The camp is too close to the main road, the Amiens-Cambrai Road, to be healthy, and we can expect to be strafed as long as we are here. Throughout the day German prisoners pass down the road in small batches. Battalion moves into the line.

**September 6th–** A very welcome bath and change of clothes at the divisional baths for some time past we have been just about crawling. In afternoon see one of our observation balloons, also a plane guarding it, shot down by an enemy machine. Our plane, an old scout, did not have a look in. It lands about a quarter of a mile from our lines and we go over and have a look at it. The pilot is only slightly wounded and is able to walk, but the observer has been hit through the neck and is unconscious. Plane is riddled with bullets and also spattered with blood. Heavy thunderstorm in late afternoon and the holes we dug for cover are flooded.

**September 7th–** Our lines are heavily shelled, but we suffer no casualties, the shells for the most part landing on some high ground two or three hundred yards distant. Division Hqrs., under the impression that our camp is drawing the shell fire, orders us to move, also the other 7th Brigade tran- sports camped nearby. We welcome the order and lose no time clearing out. Hear later that an artillery outfit that took over our lines was heavily shelled in the evening and had a number of casu- alties. Our new camp is just outside Cherisy. We have hardly got settled down for the night when Fritz sends over five shells which land close to our lines. He is using a new gun, firing shells of such velocity that they don't herald their approach, the shell's apparently travelling faster than the sound they make going through the air. The gun is promptly christened the "rubber gun," and the shells "toute suites." We beat it hurriedly from the camp but as no more shells come over we re- turn in about half an hour's time.

**September 8th –** Blows and rains all day and the ridge pole of our bivie collapses. No shelling how- ever. Go down to Y.M.C.A. in evening and run across Digby Harris, formerly,'of our section but now a sergeant in the Trench Mortar transport. Tells me their outfit got shelled out that day and had four horses killed. We talk over camp days at Shorncliffe in that pleasant summer of '15 and how one night, as the result of a silly "I will if you will," we broke out of camp and went down to the shingled beach and had a midnight swim.

**Sept. 9th, 1918–**A bitter wind sweeps across the Transport Lines all day. We dig down into the ground, partly to warm ourselves up and partly to get some shelter from the wind. Battalion salvages a piano up the line. It is in good condition and it is to be given to the Y.M.C.A. To-night, a G. S. wagon is to go up and get it. Run into Pinkie Blows of the Sigs. in evening. Tells me he has been away on a six weeks course.

**Sept. 11th–**The front line remains quiet. Bad weather we are getting no doubt is holding up our offensive. Sorry to hear that our brigadier, Daddy Dyer, is leaving us. He has endeard himself to everybody since he took over the brigade. A kindlier gentleman, yet firm enough withal. one could not wish to serve under. The new brigadier is stated to be a colonel from the 4th Division. Battalion is to come out of the line to-night, being relieved by one of the C.M.R’s. Apparently the 8th Briade is taking over from the 7th. Casualties of the battalion have not been heavy this trip, but a number were wounded last night by shell fire, some having to be dug out after being buried. Wind to-day is blowing direct to the German lines and a number of our propaganda balloons can be seen heading that way, but the rain and the sudden gusts prevent everything going according to plan and some of the balloons disgorge their pamphlets before reaching enemy territory.

**Sept. 13th–**A fine day. Sunshine very welcome after the recent bad spell of weather. Battalion has had ten men, including two officers, killed in the past two weeks. See two of our observation balloons brought down during the day. Fritzie has some daring balloon destroyers on this front, and hardly a day passes without one or more of our balloons being downed. Hear rumours of a. big American success in Alsace. Take a walk in evening along Arras-Cambrai Road. Heavy traffic everywhere and large numbers of troops on the move. No doubt more dirty, work ahead.

**Sept. 14th–**To-day's paper confirms yesterday's rumour of the American success down South. Good to know that the Yanks have struck at last. Neville Jones drops round to our lines and has a gossip with us in the course of' which he mentions that young Bowles and another prisoner broke out of the guard-room "to-day and made their getaway on scrounged bikes. We are tipped off in evening that a nearby observation balloon, an old condemned one, has been baited with high explosives (amatol) with the object of snaring an enemy plane. It is not long before one appears on the scene, heading- straight for the balloon. We watch gleefully as he dives down towards the big bag with his machine- gun spitting. The amatol is then touched off by means of a wire from the ground and there is a, shattering explosion, upon which the Fritzie plane does a sudden and unpremeditated somersault. But he manages to right his machine, to our disappoint- ment, and he gets back to his own lines. You can be certain however that that Fritzie got the shock of his life. Sorry to hear that Trimble, late of the Sigs., is reported missing. For some months past he has been a pilot in the R.A.F. Trimble contri- buted in no small measure to the gaiety of life in the Sigs. section in '16. A brave young crowd it was, that section, and a joy to be with. To a great extent it was composed of young fellows, in their late teens or early twenties, who had joined the battalion that year, and if you had searched the whole world o'er you could hardly have found a happier or more carefree lot. The Somme took a heavy toll of it but one feels that those who went West in the fighting went out into the Unknown with light hearts, such was the camaraderie of the Sigs. in the Fall of '16.

**Sept. 15th–**Indian Summer we are now having very welcome after the wet cold weather earlier in the week. Good or bad weather means a lot to the troops, camped as we are so often in the open. A day of great aerial activity. See no less than seven of our observation balloons brought down in flames. In the morning Fritz seems to be getting away with it and everybody is wanting to know what the R.A.F. is doing. But in the afternoon our planes are laying in wait above the balloons and they swoop clown and send three German planes crashing to the ground. And the Germans are losing balloons too, eight reported downed on this immediate front to-day. At night, a fine moonlit night, numerous enemy bombing planes are overhead, A big Gotha gets shot down in flames. A thrilling sight as the great flaming machine crashes to the ground. A few of the fellows cheer but the majority watch in silence. The average Canadian soldier hates Germany as a nation, -with its mad psychology that has brought this world war, but he can feel little hatred for brave men hurtling down. to a violent death.

**Sept. 16th–**Papers to-day are full of the Yank's success three days ago, and fine reading it makes. Paper also reports that Roy Brown, an Edmonton boy, has been credited with the shooting down of Richthofen, Germany's crack air fighter. It is good to know that such a feat should have been performed by a fighter pilot from Edanonton. One can picture Roy Brown years ago as a boy, sprawled on the grass under a sunny Alberta sky, and day dreaming the way boys do. He little realized then that fate had in store for him, in a few short years, a deed that would be acclaimed throughout the Empire.

No German planes over to-day. We hear that a special air circus has been sent down on this im- mediate front to keep Fritzie in his place. A hot sultry evening. We sit outside till late at night, watching our searchlight sweeping the skies. Some of our new searchlights are of great power and make a fine show. We were supposed to move back to Wailly to-day but the move was cancelled no one knows why.

**Sept. 17th–**Heavy thunderstorm in early hours of the morning. Rain comes down in torrents. We lie under bivie momentarily expecting the ridgepole to collapse, but it manages to survive the strain. Yanks apparently are continuing their good work down Verdun way. In evening take a stroll with Pinkie Blows and Botel. Bo, as O.R. clerk, is somewhat more in the know than the average fellow, though most judiciously so, and he tells us that thirteen enemy planes were shot down in this sector yesterday, and our loss was only one. Pinkie and Bo give me the latest news of the fellows who left the Sigs. to get commissions in the R.A.F. Shortly after dark another Gotha gets shot down in flames.

**Sept. 19th–**8th Brigade takes over from us. Battalion entrains for Berneville. Transport takes the road. Go ahead myself to have feed ready for the horses. Jump lorry to Arras, another to Walous and a third to Bernevllle. Tranport lines there are good, with cover for all the horses, but the previous occupants, a battalion of the 3rd Brigade, have left the place rather dirty. Transport arrives about five p.m. but the battalion does not reach the camp until after dark.

**Sept. 20th–**Papers contain the good tidings of another Franco-British victory in which ten thous- and prisoners are taken. A rumour around that Billy (Gen. Griesbach) has been recommended for the V.C. Issue of "Forty-Niner" appears and is distributed.

**Sept. 21st–**War news continues good. AIlenby's advance in Palestine makes particularly cheerful reading. Sorry to hear of the death of another "A" company original, Jack Brunskill having recently died of wounds. Names bring to mind incidents and mention of Jack Brunskill recalls a little hap- pening on the parade, ground at Shorncliffe in '15. It was a bright Summer's morn when Jack brought along the Colonel's charger, and Billy proceeded to mount it. But no sooner was he in tlie saddle than we were treated to a bucking exhibition. Billy stayed with the horse for a time, but an army saddle is not the rig for a bucking bronc, and our worthy Colonel was thrown heavily. He was on his feet again in quick time, the horse was caught, and Billy mounted the brute once more. Another buck- ing exhibition followed and Billy once more bit the dust. "Take the damned thing away," said Billy on regaining his feet this time, and Jack Brunskill departed with the charger.

**Sept. 23rd–**Chilly weather continues, but stoves have been manufactured or scrounged for the various shacks and we keep warm enough. A row in the evening in a nearby estaminet and one of the company men feels the weight, no light weight, of Bob McGrath's fist. Horse lines next us are vacated by the artillery which has been occupying them and at night a Yorkshire (West Riding) outfit take them over. We had turned in for the night and were slumbering soundly, but no further sleep was possible until those leather lunged Yorkshire lads got their horses fixed up and were settled down for the night. For about two hours they made noise enough to waken the dead.

**Sept. 24th–**Two heavy bombs, dropped from a plane travelling at a great height, drop on the Walous Huts where Div. Machine Gun Battn. is camped. Casualties heavy, the dead reported to number fifty-six. Enemy aircraft over again at night. Our searchlights get on to a big Gotha and hold it in their beams until one of our fighter planes comes along. In a matter of a few minutes he sends the big fellow down in flames.

**Sept. 25th–**Seems that the two heavy bombs dropped yesterday were from one of our own planes which dumped them accidently. Seems tough that they should fall amongst crowded huts. Everything points to another big offensive on a wide front against Fritz in a day or two. We are all hoping it may prove the knockout blow. In the early evening one of our fighter planes lands just outside our camp, engine trouble being the cause. A guard is put on the plane and the pilot finds quarters for the night with our officers. Heavy bombing in the vicinity at night. Another Gotha brought down, once again by the combination of searchlights and fighter planes. As we lie uneasily under our blankets we hear the machine'-gun fire, then the rush of the big burning bomber through the air, and finally the crash.

**Sept. 26th–**On the move again. Go through Bullecourt and camp about a kilometer the other side of Queant. Arrive there about 10.00 p.m. Raining heavily. We hear that the big offensive is to be launched to-morrow on a hundred mile front. The 1st and 4th Divisions are to go over the top on the Canadian front, and the 2nd and 3rd are to go through them. There is a tense feeling every- where, for everyone knows that great events are in the offing. About midnight a battalion of the 4th Division, the 46th someone says, falls in alongside our horse lines, preparatory to their march up the line. Their orders are read out to them by an officer in a voice of quiet confidence. There follows some ten minutes of waiting before the battalion moves off, but not a harsh word or a grouch is to be heard from officers, non-coms, or men nothing but very decent and cheerful small talk. When men are facing death it is then that the spirit triumphs over the flesh. One feels, watching this battalion, that here are men who are going to give everything in them when they go over the top in a few hours time. Then the order is given, "Form Fours, Right Turn," and the battalion marches off into the wet dark night. One can guess the thoughts of these men marching up the line and not knowing whether or no they will return. The thoughts of the married men will be with wives and children round firesides at home, while many a single man will be thinking of some slip of a girl he kissed as the troop train pulled out.

**Sept. 27th-** Our barrage opens up at 5:00 a.m and the whole front is ablaze on left and right as far as the eye can see. A goodly sight, especially to those of us who were in the trenches in '15 when our guns were rationed to about half a dozen shells a day. Weather clears and a fine day is promised. Early rumours indicate that all is going well, and our observation balloons can be seen mov- ing ahead always a cheerful sight. Transport gets orders to move and we pull out at 9:30 a.m. Once more, the third time in less than two months, we follow in the wake of a victorius advance. Prisoners pass in large numbers, many of them carrying wounded men on stretchers. Our own wounded more numerous than on the last two drives. A rumour that Cambrai has fallen. See three German observation balloons brought down in flames. Pitch our camp near Inchy. Prisoners continue to come along in great numbers. Hear that the 49th did not get into action to-day on account of the 12th Brigade having hogged our objective when they went over the top. Battalion this trip is commanded by Major Chattell, with Capt. Taylor second in command. Run into Pete Livingstone in evening. He has been in Fauchenham for the past two or three months and had quite a good time there. Sleep soundly as soon as we hit the ground. Every- one is feeling dead tired, for we got. no sleep last night.

**Sept. 28th–**Wet cold morning. Packers leave at 5:00 a.m. with ammunition for the battalion. Rest of Transport moves off at 9:00 a.m. Cross a canal, the Scheldt Canal I believe, which has been drained of water. It is evident that heavy fighting took place at this canal for the dead around here are numerous. Most of them are German. Dead horses are also to be seen everywhere. A steel bridge over the canal has been wrecked either blown up by the Germans or blasted by our artillery fire. Enemy apparently went to a great deal of trouble preparing his defence lines, and he used barbed wire in a most thorough and prodigal man- ner. Great masses of it are to be seen far more than we ever had in front of our trenches. Pitch our camp on open ground at 1:00 p.m. There are a number of hares running around loose, domestic hares escaped from their hutches, and the fellows manage to bag four of them. Prisoners continue to come down from the line. Hear that the battalion is to attack to-night to the left of Cambria. Casu- alties up to the present are not numerous.

**Sept. 29th–**Bad and unexpected news came down from the line. Battalion ran into heavy machine-gun fire when they attacked and casualties are stated to number over three hundred. Reports confusing and news we get of the fighting is of a vague nature. But war news in general from the Western Front is good, the papers reporting- capture of 22,000 prisoners. It is also reported that Bulgaria is asking for an armistice. Weather turns warm and sunny. We welcome it and have a wash and shave, the first for three days. Sixteen horses and their drivers leave section and establish advance lines near the fighting.

**Sept. 30th–**News from the line still somewhat confused but it seems that the battalion made an advance of two kilometres in spite of heavy mach- ine-gun fire. Five of our officers killed. One of the five is that popular and very gallant officer Capt. Toole. He is going to be sadly missed. Take a stroll in evening with Billy Nichol and Tom James. Captured enemy guns are numerous. Burial parties have been busy and crosses are to be seen everywhere, the dead having been buried where they fell. Graves of German dead are marked with the same crosses as our own. The cross on one German grave has been smashed by shell fire but someone has carefully mended it with wire. Whoever did that little act can surely be regarded as a Christian in the fullest sense of the word. Germans treat our dead with the same respect. When ground has changed hands more than once one often sees little mounds on which are neat crosses with the two words, "Ein Englander". Every soldier in khaki is apparently an Englishman to the German mind one more cause for complaint for those North of the Tweed! The matter of graves brings to mind the epitaph which appeared over the grave of a. Canadian killed on the Somme in '16. It read,

Poor Old Bill, he left this place

With smoking gun and smiling face,

But Bill won't mind if some good chap

Will follow up and fill the gap.

One feels that the above lines could be used with good effect as recruiting propaganda.

While on the subject of epitaphs one is reminded of the tale that went the rounds of the camp at Shorncliffe in '15. It is not a very reverent yarn but here it is. Some years ago a German ship was wrecked off Folkstone during a wild storm in the Channel and fourteen seamen were drowned. They were buried in a common grave in a local churchyard and a large stone, bearing the names of the fourteen Germans, recorded the wreck. One Summer eve in '15 a Canadian soldier, three sheets in the wind, wended his unsteady way through that graveyard. He paused at the monument to the seamen and read the inscription. His befuddled brain did not take everything in but he felt nevertheless that here were fourteen Germans 'who were not doing much for their Fatherland. So he took a chalk pencil from his pocket and wrote on the stone in big letters, "Wake up, you sons of b..-.-.-., your Kaiser needs you."

**Oct. 1st–**A day of great news. Bulgaria surrenders unconditionally. Things on the Western Front are going our way too. Seven battles reported waging along the line and all going in our favour. General feeling that the end of the war is not far distant. Take a walk into Bourlon in evening.

Place badly smashed up. A clear evening and several German planes are overhead, but they do not disturb this neighbourhood. Battalion comes out of the line. Casualties are around three hundred mark but percentage of killed is lower than in previous engagements, machine-guns having figured largely in the fighting and they wound far more than they kill. Colonel Palmer returns from England and rejoins the battalion.

**Oct. 2nd**–One of our observation balloons gets shot down but fellows hardly give the big sausage a glance as it comes down in flames it has become such a common sight to see balloons, ours and theirs, brought down. See Goldbrenson in evening and he tells me of the part "A" company played in the recent fighting. Describes how Husky Leding- ham got cut off from the company and spent the day alone in a shell-hole. Amongst the badly wounded is Gallant. Billy More killed by a machine- gun bullet from a German plane. It was flying so low that Billy was shooting at it with a revolver and he died with the weapon in his hand. Gold- brenson goes on to say that at one stage of the fighting a large group of Germans were seen ap- proaching. They appeared to be unarmed and were possibly intending to surrender, but they did not have their hands up so our machine-gunners took no chances and shot them down. Goldbrenson tells me that Gleave and he are the only two originals now left in "A" company. On return to camp read "Trilby". Much interested and entertained by the book, though art students in Paris in the middle of the last century were surely not quite so lacking in worldly knowledge as Little Billee and his companions, even if it was the Victorian era.

**Oct. 3rd–**St. Quentin reported in our hands, also the greater portion of Cambrai. A groom from Division puts up in our lines at noon. Tells us we will be here for a few days. On the strength of that information we dig down into the ground to protect ourselves, and the horses, from the night bombing. Hec McKenzie and I fix up a good place for ourselves, three feet below ground level with a bivie cover for the roof. A cold windy night but we are warm and snug enough unless the rain comes and floods us out. Heinie over as usual at night but he drops no eggs near us.

**Oct. 4th–**More good news. Turkey is reported to have followed Bulgaria and to have surrendered unconditionally. And Lens is reported to be in our hands. Leave is progressing well, Sid Rowdon and Bob Amos of our section getting away to-day. A clear night and Heinie, or Fritzie, call him what you will, plasters the countryside with bombs, some coming unpleasantly close to our lines.

**Oct. 5th–**Last night's bombing rather put the wind up everybody and we spend the day deepening the pits for the horses, also our own shelters. Papers report the capture of Annentiers. Things are going our way all right. Tony Peterson says we've got Fritzie by the tail on a downhill pull.

**Oct. 7th–**Enemy evacuating the Flanders coast, and there is a rumour that he has asked for an armistice. Major McLeod leaves us and becomes C.O. of the R.C.R's. Our loss is their gain, they have got as cool-headed a colonel as can be found on this Western Front. A number of high explosive shells land just beyond our camp during the day, no casualties resulting. See two of our planes in afternoon collide and crash to the ground.

**Oct. 9th–**Hear a heavy barrage up the line in the early morning. Our observation balloons moving up ahead give us a good idea that Cambrai is now entirely in our hands. Get the news later that Fritz pulled out of the town without putting up much of a fight. A few prisoners taken. Five civilians, a young man and four women, come down the road from Cambrai. They arrive at our camp in style, driving in a captured German officers' buggy, which had been turned over to them by our fellows. "Tres bon," they say, obviously very happy at the turn of events. The man tells us in broken English that he was ordered into a back area when the Germans, evacuated Cambrai, but he hid in a cellar for three days until our troops entered the town. These civilians apparently were fairly well treated by the Germans. They say they were paid for their labour three francs a day for the men and two for the women. Our brigade not called into action to-day, the 2nd Division having sent down word they were not in need of any assistance. This day, the

**9th October**, is the third anniversary of our landing in France. A not easily forgotten day that, with the gruelling march with full packs up the long steep hill at Boulogne.

**Oct. 10th**–Cambrai is out of bounds to the troops but old Bob Aspinaul made his way into the place yesterday, eluding various of our sentries trust an old soldier for that. He gives us a good description of tlie town. Apparently it has not been badly damaged by shell fire. We move at 9:30 a.m. Travel through Inchy-en-Artois and pitch our camp about 3 :00 p.m. on the other side of Queant.

**Oct. 11th, 1918**–Take over camp vacated yesterday by an Imperial A.S.C. outfit. One of the best camps we have ever struck. Good dug-outs for ourselves and covered lines for the horses. Good news continues to come down from the front. Our troops reported to be twenty kilometres the other side of Cambrai. Can hear heavy shelling in the distance and thousands of men are being rushed up the line this evening a string of lorries and London double-deck buses a mile or more' long passed our camp, and all laden with troops. Leave list progressing well. Mose Williams returned from Blighty to-day and young Trout got away yesterday. We are told that 155 men from each brigade are now proceeding on leave every week.

**Oct. 12th–** Hec. McKenzie and I spend the day fixing up our dug-out. Discover a dud shell almost hidden in the back wall and later note the hole it medea when it came through the roof. It has evidently been there some time and, needless to remark, we do not disturb it. We do some scrounging for material after which Hec, being the skilled craftsman that he is, builds a fireplace and a chimney and we afterwards fix up a couple of bunks. As comfortable a dug-out as one could wish for, and at night we feel well rewarded for our efforts as we sit in front of the open fire.

**Oct. 14th–**A rumour that Germany has agreed to evacuate all conquered territory. Fellows betting taat the war will be over by Christmas. Civilians moving back into Queant. Sorry to hear of the death of Slim Hobson. Capt. Hudson, our former O.C., visits our lines.

**Oct. 15th–**We hear with much regret of the death of General Lipsett killed by a sniper. He is buried in Queant and the whole 3rd Division is represented at the funeral of their old commander. General Lipsett had that inspiring presence about him which is the essential characteristic of every great soldier and leader of men. It was a stroke of luck for Canada that he happened to be in the country when the war broke out.

**Oct. 16th–**Papers report big victory up North and the capture of Roulers. General Currie inspects the brigade in the afternoon. Tells us that the Canadian Corps may, or may not, be called upon to fight another big battle. He adds that in two months time every battalion will be up to full strength. At the end of his speech he is given three cheers. They can hardly be called rousing cheers Canadians never seem to be able to cheer like a British crowd. Canadians can make plenty of noise all right but they don't give the deep full- throated cheers that you get from British soldiers, or sailors. Can any Forty-Niner who was on the S.S. "Metagama" in '15 ever forget how those cheers crashed out from the decks of the two British destroyers when they met us. To the writer it was one of the most thrilling moments of the war.

**Oct.. 17th–**Our divisional concert party, "The Dumbells," return from their tour of London. Apparently they made quite a hit over there. They put on a new show in Queant to-night. Transport section is allotted only eight tickets the eagerness of the troops to see the new show is so keen that only a limited number of tickets is supplied each battalion. Draw one of the tickets myself. Thorough- ly enjoyed the show, with its new costumes and scenery. These amateur troupers are in the highest spirits and they give us a riotous and merry evening.

**Oct. 18th–**Get the good news of the capture of Lille, also of Ostend. Weather ideal for the Fall campaign regular Indian Summer. Strong rum- ours that we move Douai way in a day or two. Dave (Sergt. Irons) tells us in his richest brogue how he was awakened last night by a rumpus at his billets, caused by one of our officers, after a drink too much, underestimating, not entirely without reason, the virtue of a young woman in the building. These little incidents will occur in the best regulated battalions. It is evident, putting two and two together, that Dave played the knight- errant on this occasion.

**Oct. 20th–**Transport takes the road at 8:00 a.m. The companies travel by lorry. Weather breaks and it is drizzling as we set out. Travel by way of Marquion, Aubencheui, Aubigny (where we cross a pontoon bridge), Fresian and Moncheeourt. This country we are passing through has only just been evacuated by the Germans. The various towns and villages show little outward sign of war but the interiors of many building's have been wantonly gutted by the Boche. On two or three occasions we get held up where the road has been laid, one of these mines going up about two h-oiii-s before we reach the spot. Many of the civilians is this area were evacuated by the Germans but a considerable number remain. The Canadian Corps is reported to be feeding 22,000 of them. so we expect our rations to be light. Our destination is Aniche, which we reach about 5 :30 pm. Must have travelled thirty kilometres to-day and it has been a miserable march, it having- rained all the time. Stable our horses in a big freight shed at Aniche. There is a stove in the station ticket-office and we rustle fuel, light a fire, and get dried out.

**Oct. 21st–**On the road again at 8:00 a.m. No lorries to-day and entire battalion hoofs it. Travel through various villages and towns, including Somain, Fenam and Erre. The civilians everywhere give us a great welcome, the kiddies with happy faces aglow running- out and grabbing us by the hand, while the "Vive leg Canadiens" of their elders set our spines a-tingling. Womenfolk come out of the houses with glasses of beer and cups of cocoa and coffee, which we gulp down as we march along. In one village a slim goodlooking girl is among the crowd of women who are giving us drinks. She is about to proffer a cup of coffee when she is shoved back roughly by another woman. "Madame Boche, Madame Boche," she shouts to us by way of ex- planation and other women then take up the cry. During the enemy occupation the girl had evidently been the mistress of a German soldier, probably an officer judging by her appearance and good clothes. As we glance back we get a glimpse of a pale face surrounded by a group of angry women. She is striving hard to appear composed but it is very evident she is more than a. bit frightened and' we feel sorry for her. The towns and villages we pass through continue to show little signs of war and tlie inhabitants, many of whom have been working in the coal mines, don't appear to be' under-nourished. But there are no two ways about them being delighted to see us. In places where the road has been mined, by the. retreating Germans, men, women and children are hard at work helping to fill in the big craters our engineers say the civilians had some of the great holes half filled in before they arrived on the scene. The engineers are going to have a mighty busy time of it, bridges, railroads and roads have been blown up everywhere. The Boche has done a thorough job all right in his destruction of transport facilities. Our march to-day is necessarily slow for we are held up at various places, particularly cross-roads, by the craters. At Somain we are told that the 1st Division got in touch with the enemy at this spot, killing five machine-gunners. We put up for the night at Wandigmes Hamag-e.

**Oct. 22nd–**We get a rush marching order in the early morning and are on the road at 7:00 a.m. A short march to Hasnon. Our patrols are evidently precipitating Fritzie's retreat for we note two bridges which have not been destroyed. All cross- roads however have been blown up. At Hasnon we hear that the 42nd and the R.C.R's. are in touch with the enemy. Battalion gets marching orders at 4:00 p.m. but they only take half of the' trans- port with them. Remainder of the section, includ- ing myself, remain at Hasnon. Our billets are in an old factory, which was used by the Germans as a prison camp. Civilians tell us that 700 British prisoners were housed here. From all accounts they were badly fed and had to depend for their subsistence on parcels from home. Sanitary conditions in the camp were obviously non-existent, or almost non-existent. Flags are flying everywhere from houses in Hasnon for four long years the towns- people have carefully kept them hidden, waiting and. waiting for this day of deliverance. We hear that the battalion is spending the. night at St. Amand.

**Oct. 23rd–**On the road in early afternoon. Not a sign of a horse, cow, goat or hen, or any living- animal in fact, as we pass through country. The Boche apparently has either killed off everything or else taken it along with him. Arrive at St. Amand, where we join the rest of the transport. Fritz is reported to be less than two miles from St. Amand he has only just cleared out of the place. A lot of the civilians have been evacuated from St. Amand, but a large number still remain in the town. These latter are touchingly grateful at regaining their freedom. They do everything they can for us and, though they have next to nothing left them, they want to make us little presents, and not one cent will they accept for anything. Our billets, also lines for the horses, are in an old pottery, which Fritz used as a veterinary depot. It is an immense building, big enough to stable several hundred horses. Turn in early and luxuriate in plenty of dry straw.

**Oct. 24th–**All civilians ordered to leave St. Amand a number were killed and wounded last night when the town was shelled. Many casualties also caused by gas shells, the civilians having no gas masks for protection. Pitiful sights everywhere as the people leave their homes, taking what few possessions they can carry with them. Many are old and feeble yet they are burdened down with quite heavy loads from homes in which they have lived all their lives. . Our fellows are doing what they can to help them. Wounded civilians are numerous and they are being taken away in Red Cross ambulances. Priests and nuns are comfort- ing them and doing a great work. In evening take a stroll through the streets with Tom James. We go into a big empty theatre, notice that the red plush has been stripped from all the seats. The Boche has left little in his systematic pillaging and looting, and our fellows are feeling a bitterness now that they have not experienced in all the years of trench fighting. Just before we turn in for the. night an enemy plane flies low over the town. We seldom shoot at planes these days, considering it a waste of ammunition, but this one is flying so low that we get our rifles out and blaze away at it, but without result.

**Oct. 25th–**We are needing a bath badly and hear that one can be had at Aremberg some eight kilometres distant. There is a bath parade after breakfast and we set out for that spot. Our way takes us through Raismes Forest. It has been a noble forest at one time but there is no good timber left standing in it now. It has all been cut down by the Germans, and it is apparent that prisoners were used on the job for we come across various deserted! prison camps in the bush. For about two kilometres we walk along a railroad. German thoroughness in destructive measures is again in evidence here. About every hundred yards short chunks have been blown out, or cut out of the steel. Fritz no doubt left in somewhat of a hurry otherwise he would have taken the rails along with him. At Armberg we are rewarded by a good bath and brand-new underw&ar, so the lice should leave us alone for a few days. Hear that the battalion goes up the line to-morrow to relieve the 42nd, who are on outpost duty. The Forty-Twas apparently are having a good time and they don't want to be relieved. Their only casualties during the trip have been three men wounded by snipers.

**Oct. 26th–**Move up the line cancelled. Hear that we are to return to-morrow to' Hasnon. General impression that we are going back to incorporate the new drafts. Living well these days, at least comparatively well, for there are vegetables everywhere that can be had for the taking, many civilian owners having been evacuated to back

**Oct. 27th–**Two small bombs drop in the street we are billeted in, and a girl is wounded. No casualties among the soldiers. We are relieved at noon by the 5th C.M.R.'s. Take the road to Hasnon and on arrival there we take over our old stables in the prison camp. A wet afternoon and evening, but a big mail of parcels and letters cheers the troops up.

**Oct. 28th–**The old prison camp we are billeted in is in a filthy condition 'and we spend the morning cleaning it up. Battalion o.n working parties, repairing- roads and putting them in good shape. News in the papers is of the best and it is a cheerful crowd that sits around the stove in the evening. It does not take much to start an argument in this section of ours and a great one gets going when someone tells of the only way to swim horses across a river half a dozen other fellows have different notions and for half an hour or so there is a rare old hullabaloo. A clear night and we can hear great numbers of our bombers heading over towards Fritzie's lines a sweet sound as we lay on the hard floor and try to keep warm -with one blanket apiece. We can hear plenty of Fritzie's planes too, but they drop nothing in this area.

**Oct. 30th–**A few small shells, probably 3-inch, drop in the town but do little damage. Two land in the yard outside our building and make small craters. In afternoon we move back to the great pottery at St. Amand. The C.M.R.'s have their horses in our old stables but we take over other stalls in the immense building. Get the news of Austria's final collapse. "It won't be long now", everyone is saying, "it" of course referring to the end of the war. Everybody in high spirits.

**Oct. 31st–**Turkey follows Austria's lead and surrenders unconditionally. General belief that Germany will cave in anytime now. C.M.R.'s pull out of pottery in morning. Their stables are handier than ours so we move into them without waiting for orders.

**Nov. 1st–**Heavy bombardment up the line in early morning. Hear later in the day that eight hiindred enemy prisoners have been taken on the Canadian front. Battalion still on working parties.

**Nov. 2nd–**A day of cold drizzling rain, which makes our auarters in the great pottery seem all the more palatial. In evening go over to the lines of the packers my old crowd and we spend the time Tarnmg about the little night adventures we used to have on the Vimy front. While we are tallriag Southern returns from Somain. Tells us he saw a batch of five hundred German prisoners being escorted through the town, and as they were marched through the streets women shook their fists'and cursed them. Prisoners need strong escorts these days. Long letter from home. It is good to know that. the severe influenza epidemic in Eng- land, which has claimed so many lives, is now abating.

**Nov. 4th–**We move to Anzin, about ten kilometres distant, our route taking us through Raismes. This district is heavily settled and we march through- out between rows of houses. Pitch our horse lines in the shelter of some old mine buildings. Anzin has been shelled heavily and most of the civilian population has been evacuated. Our troops have not been in this area yet and the town is just as the civilians left it. Several of us go for a stroll in the afternoon and our steps take us into the grounds of a large chateau. The building has been hit by shells but the greater portion of it is un- damaged. We enter through unlocked doors and find the place just as its former occupants left it a day or two ago. Apparently they took little with them apart from their personal valuables. We wander from room to room, our heavy army boots trespassing on the thick Brussels carpets. Glitter- ing chandeliers, old paintings, exquisite and antique furniture, and a library full of morocco bound books all proclaim the owner to be a man of culture and great 'wealth. It would appear that he was a German sympathizer, and in cahoots with them, otherwise all this loot would hardly have remained untouched. We explore every corner of the chateau but there is not a vestige of what we are particularly interested in at the moment food and drink. We afterwards go through the gardens and the big greenhouses. A small detached building near the chateau was evidently the children's nursery and schoolroom. There were apparently three children, and an English governess. It is evident that the latter had gone through her desk hurriedly prior to departure, various old letters, bearing English post- marks. being strewn on the floor. At one end of the building there is an empty stable and here the children had their ponies, with the ponies' names at the head of each stall. Shortly after leaving the chateau we hear it has been taken over by brigade officers trust them not to miss a plum like this. Our own section is billeted all over the town, and we find cover for most of the horses in various barns. Spend a comfortable night myself at the home of an old' blacksmith.

**Nov. 5th–**We are all warned to be on the alert for booby traps and mines. It seems three Canadian engineers were inspecting a clock in an empty house yesterday when an explosion occurred, killing two of them and blinding the third. Hec McKenzie and I explore the great ironworks by the side of the canal. It contains a large number of German wag'ons, gun carriages and other booty. The fact that these were not destroyed would indicate that Fritz is losing his methodical morale or perhaps he had to skin out so quickly that he had no time to destroy them. About noon we get a "stand-to", and we are all expecting an advance up the. Line. An hour later it is cancelled which doesn't make us at all sore, it being a wet miserable day. When lony Peterson comes back from delivering rations in the afternoon he tells us he saw an old French- pan dragging a corpse out of his yard. It was the body of a German, slain by our advance guards a couple of days ago. and as the old fellow lugged the heavy body behind him he muttered curse after cm-se. He was dragging him out by a potato fork, the curved tines of which were stuck into the throat of the dead German. Such is war.

**Nov. 6th., 1918–** An early reveille and w,e are on the road at 7:00 a.m. Travel through Valencienes. A fine city and it is good to note that many imposing buildings have not suffered irreparably. Quite a number of civilians left in the place. They owe their presence to the fact that they defied the German decree which ordered their evacuation to the back area. They are naturally overjoyed at their deliverance. A woman tells us in good English that the Germans recently shot several men who refused to divulge where they had hidden potatoes and grain. She goes on to say that the Boche cleared out of the city at 7:30 am. Monday, the day before yesterday. Canadian troops were hot on their heels for they entered Valencienes an hour later. We continue on our way which takes us through St. Saulvem where there are several dead Heinies lying by the roadside. Meet three small batches of prisoners, all gineers, being taken down the line under C.M.R. escort. Reach Quinaing about 7:00. Tie up our horses in a larg-e ironworks, part of which the Boch had converted into stables. Find billets ourselves in various parts of the town. Four of us billeted with two old dames who do everything they can for us.

**Nov. 7th-**Hear that the C.M.R's. took their objective yesterday with light casualties, one of their battalions having only two men wounded. They then went on and hogged objectives which had been mapped out for other battalions. Hear rumours of other big successes all along the line. Wie pull out of Quinaing at 1:00 p.m. and journey through Quarouble. Notice some bandaged civilians in Quarouble, probably the victims of shellfire. The main road is crowded and we of the Transport leave it in an effort to make better time. A mistake, for we get into difficulties in soft ground and have to return to the road. A few dead Ger- mans are to be seen, apparently killed in yesterday's fighting. As we are passing one corpse a girl, wearing high-laced boots, walks up to it and kicks it in the face, and at a crossroads some women start stoning a dead German as they see us approaching. Fellows further down the column remark after- wards that they saw a small boy committing an offence on the body which cannot very well be re- corded in these pages, while adults standing by laughed and encouraged him. Seems strange that civilians should act thus when soldiers on both sides, with few exceptions, treat the dead with respect. It should be remembered however that these same civilians in 1914 wished only to follow the even tenor of their way and then came the German invasion which has blasted their lives and everything they hold most dear for four long years. Quarouble is being shelled as we enter it, two shells bursting unpleasantly close, and later some gas shells cause us to don our masks hurriedly. We are now only about twentyfour hours behind Heinie. Spend night at Quievrechain. Battalion is to advance tomorrow. We are now in Belgium.

**Nov. 8th–**Battalion leaves Quievrechain at 8:00 a.m., taking half of transport with them. The rest of us, of the transport section, follow on at 2:00 p.m. It is evident that Heinie is finding little time now to blow up the roads behind him. And the Germans either feel somewhat better disposed towards these Belgians or perhaps they just didn't have time to carry off the livestock as they retreated, for quite a number of cattle, and a few horses, are to be seen on the farms. Thulin, where we camp, has been little damaged by shellfire, but the farm where' we are billeted has suffered considerably. The owner tells us that a. German howitzer was in the yard for several days and when it was fired the concussion in the confined space cracked walls and blew the tiles from the roofs of the farm buildings. Howitzer was only pulled out yesterday. Some hours later there was an ex- plosion caused by a hidden shell, probably an eight inch, to which the Germans had attached a slow time fuse. Considerable damage caused by ex- plosion but farmer and his family escaped injury. Shell no doubt left as a memento for us, rather than them. C coy. is out on advanced patrol and they report that Heinie is only about two miles ahead of them. As night falls the enemy shells the road up towards the canal. Civilians put every- thing they have at our disposal and at night we know the luxury of white sheets and soft beds. Our horses are stabled in barns in various parts of the village.

**Nov. 9th–**Hear that one of our patrols pre- vented a bridge from being blown up, in which en- gagement we suffered one casualty. Three es- caped prisoners, kilties from an Imperial outfit. reach the village. Tell us of their experiences in various prison camps. They say they were not badly treated by the Germans though they fared badly .enoug-h in regard to food. They add that German soldiers are themselves short of grub now, Civilians tell us that atrocities were committed by the German troops in 1914, but when it comes to details they are a little vague. The battalion how- ever is investigating alleged atrocities by the enemy when a British field hospital was captured in this district four years ago. One thing however seems certain now however hard the Belgians have been hit by the war they have not suffered anything like as cruelly as the French. Farms have their livestock, stores and shops have a certain amount of goods, and everywhere one sees men of military age in civilian garb a very different picture to the France that has been under enemy occupation. Four spies, or suspected spies, three men and one woman, were rounded up in this neighbourhood to-day and handed over to Brigade. Rumours reach us of internal trouble in Germany and it seems there is good reason to believe these rumours now. Prisoners we have captured recently have under- wear made of a material which contains a good deal of paper, or something like it, and it is obvious that civilians must be a good deal worse off: and a couple of transport animals we captured a few days ago were sorry-looking affairs half starved ponies that cannot have had any grain for months, or perhaps years. When the people of Thulin saw our sleek, well-groomed transport horses coming down the street yesterday, with spotless harness and limbers, and steel chains glittering, they thought ours must be some special show outfit and they find it hard to believe when we tell them that all British army transports are the same. German money is freely used by civilians here and when we make little purchases we often get it in exchange. Fellows are kicking themselves now for not hanging on to money taken from prisoners, officers for the most part. Frisking of prisoners is not of course permitted by King's Regulations but it is done by many a front-line man and regarded as legitimate spoils of war. Battalion moves on ahead. Trans- port pulls out at 7:30 p.m., the 52nd taking over from us. We strike up north. A couple of hours later General Currie and a group of staff officers pass us on their horses as we are halted by the side of the road. Currie tells us, "It won't be long now, boys." We reach Pommereui where we put up for the night. Heinie reported to be on the run everywhere. Rumoured that hostilities are to cease at 11:00 a.m. on the llth, that is the day after tomorrow. A quiet night, not a sound of a gun.

**Nov. 10th–**Up early and on the road at 6:00 a.m. We of the Transport travelling on our own and we take a northerly route to avoid a blown-up bridge. Travel through Terte and Baudour. Civilians give us a great welcome, cheering and shout- ing and waving flags. Bring coffee and beer, also cigars and apples from their homes and press them on us. Some gas hanging about Terte, for the Germans sent gas shells into the place last night. We continue to make good progress and congratu- late ourselves on selecting a route free from traffic. We leave a wood and take a road across open country leading to Ghlin, but our advance is rudely halted when a gun opens up on us from a clump of trees less than a mile away on our immediate front. We wheel round hurriedly and lose no time gaining the shelter of the wood we left some ten minutes ago. Our casualties are light, three horses being hit but none badly– Buster, Bugs and Lucas. We had apparently almost run smack into the enemy, but as only one gun was doing the shooting it was likely the last of a battery being pulled out. On regaining the woods, pickets are stationed on the outskirts. They clean up and load somewhat neglected rifles and hope for a little action. About an hour 'later, at noon, an advanced cavalry patrol, our own cavalry, reach the wood. They are the 5th Lancers and a brave sight it is to see them wending their way through the trees. They re- main with us for a time and then proceed on their way cautiously. As they fade away in the distance one wonders if any of these cavalry-men were with their regiment in '14 in those sharp bloody little clashes on Flemish roads between British troops and German uhlans. About 2 :00 p.m. an advanced scouting party of the Highland Light Infantry put in an appearance. When they first see us in the distance they deliberate for half an hour or so as to whether we are friend or foe. When they do eventually join us they tell us we are away off the Canadian front. It seems this wood we have oc- cupied for the last three hours was their objective. So we of the 49th Transport, can claim to have captured this wood near Ghlin. Understand now why civilians gave us such a wild welcome to-dav we were the first British troops they had seen 'for four years. Later in the day we take the road again and eventually reach Jemappes, where we find three companies of the battalion. Bill Reeves tells us, on coming from Bandour with his team and limber, that German prisoners being escorted\* through that town had a rough time of it, the guards having work cut out keeping back the angry populace.

**Nov. 11th–**Peace and Victory. It is hard to believe the great news that hostilities will cease at 11:00 a.m. to-day. The troops take the news calmly, the prevailing feeling being" one of profound thankfulness that the war is over, but the civilians parade through the town singing and shouting and waving flags. We leave Jemappes and take the road to Mons, the same road that the British regu- lars, the immortal Contemptibles, trod in 1914.

One can picture them trudging along this cobbled road, sore-footed and bereft of sleep, yet with the spirit ever top-dog over the flesh. Yes, on they marched, "bloody but unbowed." And once in awhile someone would shout, "Are we downhearted?" and then, after a pause, the defiant "No" would crash out. But sometimes instead of the "No", by means of-variation yet meaning just. the same, there would be the "You're ........ right we are." Small wonder the' British Tommies' sense of humour is unfathomable to the stolid mind of the German. There is evidence of some fighting' having taken place on the outskirts of Mons, two German corpses lying by the side' of the road. Not far distant is one of our own dead, a kiltie and civilians have strewn his body with flowers. Seems a cruel fate for him to have been killed a few hours, perhaps a few minutes, before the war ended. As we march through the flag-bedecked streets of the ancient city the crowds greet us with great enthusiasm. Girls march along with the troops and the fellows are hard put to it to keep their badges. In the afternoon the big square, the Grande Place, in the heart of the city, is a seething mass of humanity when General Currie presents the Corps flag to the Mayor. It is impossible to see what is going on, the crush being so great, but word goes round that the King of the Belgians and the. Prince of Wales ar,e on the distant platform with Currie and the Mayor.

After supper a number of us return to the square. There are several estaminets in the vicinity and we go into one of them where the troops are celebrating mildly. They are singing all the old favourites one after another. One is reminded here that as the Forty-Twas marched into Mons this morning, having gained a lead over the rest of the brigade, they were greeted with "Tipperary" played by a carillon of bells, the ringers apparently not having forgotten how the British Tommies marched to the song in '14. And a good song it is, and one that deserves to live. There is a lilt to it that raises the spirit, it has the "sweetest girl" for its theme and, for good measure, there are place names that recall fond memories.

The civilian population throw their homes open to the troops and put their best beds at our disposal. The battalion is soon scattered all over the city and methinks it will be some time before everybody is rounded up again. Our transport horses are stabled in a large indoor riding academy, a fine building with big mirrors on the sides to let riders see how they look on their mounts as they jog past. Spend night in riding school myself as it is a case of being up betimes to issue out the hay and oats.

Sleep does not come easily. Now it is all over one's mind goes back through the war years: the first enthusiastic days in Edmonton and the efforts, when detailed for guard, to "get the stick," - the still, warm May evening when the troopship reached Plymouth- the route marches through the Kentish countryside-the five months in the shambles of the Ypres Salient when the battalion faced just about all that hell had to offer and was not found wanting-the Somme where the sweets of victory were first tasted-the falling snow that Easter morn when Vimy Ridge was captured-the futile and wasted heroism of Passchendaele-and then the glorious 8th of August this year with the knowledge that final victory was ours.

Those who have been through it all must feel that their lives are the richer for having been actors these four years in this the world's greatest drama. There has been suffering, yes intense suffering, but is not life all the sweeter and more worthwhile. after body and spirit have been tempered in the fiery furnace.

**Nov. 12th, 1918–**Heavy explosions in all parts of the district in early morning makes us wonder if hostilities have broken out afresh. Civilians alarmed and the troops none too pleased at the thought that the war may not be over yet. However word soon comes along that the explosions are the result of delayed action mines. We hear that the 3rd Division is to form part of the army of occupation in Germany, news which arouses little enthusiasm. Winding up .the watch on the Rhine and seeing something of Heinie’s home life makes an appeal to some, but to the big majority of Forty-Niners the only worthwhile road is that which leads to Jasper Ave. Word comes through of the terms imposed on German and citizens of Mons parade through the streets to celebrate the occasion.

**Nov. 13th–** An automobile flying a white flag attacts considerable attention as it drives through the streets. It is a german officer who is pointing out the location of unexploded mines to Canadian engineers accompanying him. Pay parade in afternoon. Money runs out and half of us get no pay and will have to wait until tomorrow. Funeral in late afternoon of members of the brigade who were killed in the capture of Mons. Number of dead, which is small, includes two members of the 42nd Transport, killed by a shell on the day before the armistice. The city fathers ask permission to bear the cost of the funeral and also to make all necessary arrangements. Everything is thereupon placed in then- hands, and a most impressive ceremony results. Tommy Higgins drops round to transport lines in evening. Tells of seeing the bodies of two German soldiers who had been beaten to death by the popu- lace in a little village on the outskirs of Mons the day before the armistice.

**Nov. 14th–** A rumour that we march into German? before the end of the month. Three girls, who had cohabited openly with Germany soldiers during the occupation, had their hair shorn off this afternoon on a platform in the Grande Place in the midst of a great jeering crowd. There were many Canadian soldiers in the throng watching the women's shame but they kept silent. Some may have felt like intervening but they did not. Since the day after the armistice the Dumbells have been presenting H. M. S. "Pinafore" in the city's largest theatre. Big crowds have packed the place the last two nights and the same condition prevails this evening. Manage however to get into the building but only to the rear of one of the large boxes. Not a glimpse of the stage is to be had from the rear of the box but most of the show is to be seen in a large mirror hung on the wall. The Dumbells, now augmented by the Princess Pats and the Y. Emma concert parties, are as rollicking a lot of troupers as ever appeared in an army theatre. Never known them in higher spirits or in better form and they give us a great evening. Various liberties have been taken with the script, which under the circum- stances is understandable, the producer realizing that ardent Savoyards in the audience are few and far between.

A grand comic opera-H.M.S. "Pinafore," and Gilbert and Sullivan at their best. One feels that in it they have caught the spirit of the British Navy, past and present. The spirit of the men of the lower deck who, when Nelson at Trafalgar gave his somewhat un-Nelson-touch signal, "England ex- pects that every man\_will do his duty," muttered among themselves. "What does the silly old \_\_\_ think we are going to do." But those same rough tars loved Nelson with a love exceeding that of a man for a woman and proud tears ran down their cheeks at his funeral down the cheeks of men who had been ashamed of tears since their cradle days.

**Nov. 15th–** A big review day. The whole Canadian army, each battalion represented by one company, marches through the Grande Place. All kinds of mucky-mucks present on the reviewing platform. Take a stroll in evening with Pete Livingstone. Have a talk with a group of former British prisoners, and it is interesting listening to their experiences. They have little complaint to make of their treatment in captivity, apart from the odd harsh, senior German N.C.O.'they encountered once in a while.

**Nov. 16th–**Cold dry weather continues- Fellows are chuckling- over the recent banquet given by the mayor of Mons to the officers of the 7th Brigade, It seems that he invited each officer to bring a lady friend along. Now, as the brigade had only been in Mons a day or two the officers had had little time to get acquainted with the elite of the city. On the other hand they had, in numerous cases, met ladies whose acquaintance called for no formal introduction-ladies who could lay no claim to unimpeachable virtue. So the Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady rubbed shoulders at the mayoral banquet, somewhat to the consternation of various civic officials, though from all accounts the situation did not worry the old mayor much. Nov. 17th Military police raid a house at the entrance to the riding-school, where our horses are stabled. Make arrests of an alleged spy. Hear later in the day that he has been released turned out to be a Pole who had not registered.

**Nov. 18th–**It is just a week since hostilities ceased, and fellows are experiencing a boredom now which they did not. know when the war was on. As long as the fighting continued there was an aim to be achieved but now, with no goal in sight, fellows are getting restless. For years Canadian soldiers have longed for a victorious peace and looked on it as a cup brimful of happiness, but now it has come about it seems a bit in the nature of a mirage. There is keen satisfaction in the overthrow of a tyranical power that threatened the entire world, yet the humblest buck private can understand why Alexander the Great sat down and cried when there were no more worlds to conquer. It's the old story of wanting what you haven't got and then not wanting it when you've got it.

**Nov. 19th–**Yesterday the 1st Division passed through Mons on their way to Germany. The 2nd Division are also reported on the move towards the Rhine. We turn in our helmets and gas masks and are not sorry to see the last of them. In evening go once more to the Dumbells' H.M.S. "Pina- fore" and again enjoy it thoroughly. High spot of the evening is the rendering of "He is an English- man," which gets an ovation from the audience of Canadian soldiers and one feels, amidst the cheer- ing as the song ends, that tribute is being paid to the British Tommy. Canadians may not understand Thomas Atkins fully but they know enough about him to appreciate his doggedness as a fighter, his sporting spirit, his sense of humour, his love of animals, and a whole lot more of his characteristics, in short his general wholesomeness.

**Nov. 20th–**Fine dry weather ends. It is cold and wet to-day and we are not looking forward to the march eastwards, which is usually referred to as "the big hike." Spend evening in Y.M.C.A. talking to former British prisoners. They all tell the same tale regarding food while captives in Germany–it was bad both in quantity and quality, but they add that German soldiers in the back areas did not fare a great deal better. They speak highly of French and Belgian civilians who helped them out whenever possible from their own meagre food supplies. They found many German officers and N.C.O.'s kindly and considerate but others, a. minority, harsh and unfeeling. One former prisoner is particularly bitter towards a British sergeant placed in authority over them by the Germans. He apparently was the Wandsworth Prison warden type and generally hated by all who had anything to do with him.

**Nov. 21st–**Transport inspected in morning by our section officer. Inspection in afternoon by the colonel, and tomorrow there is to be a brigade in- spection. Fellows getting fed up with all this spit- and-polish, emanating from Brigade for the most part, and grousing is general. "No shining" is to be seen chalked on the walls of the school building where the companies are billeted. Now the fighting is over there is a genera] feeling that some time at last should be devoted to training men for return to civilian life, but instead of that more stress than ever is being placed on button shining and equip- ment washing and blancoing. The powers-that-be would be well advised to pay some heed to the writing on the wall.

**Nov. 22nd–**Rawlinson, former scout sergeant who lost an eye in the Somme fighting, sends word to me that he is in Mons, and I drop round to his billet, in the evening'. He has a commission now in a railroad battalion. Mentions that Lefoe also holds a commission now. It was Rawlinson and Lefoe who, after my brother had been killed on night patrol in No Man's Land, at Ypres in '16, went out the following night, at no small risk to themselves, and brought the body in.

**Nov. 23rd–**Army ordnance dump, located in nearby school buildings, lets it be known that they have far more stock on hand than they can pack into Germany. Everyone thereupon goes over and gets a brand-new outfit of uniform and underwear, regardless of whether it is needed or not. The waste in this man's army is something criminal, but war is inevitably wasteful and always has been. This same sort of thing probably went on when Moses was a quarter-bloke.

**Nov. 24th–**Baseball and football being en- couraged in the battalion, and very wisely so, our own officers realizing that these waiting days are difficult ones. Brigadier addresses all N.C.O.'s of the brigade in the city theatre on the matter of discipline. Letters from Edmonton tell of the seri- ous 'flu epidemic there.

**Nov. 26th–**Arrangements made now for fellows to visit Brussels, a party from the battalion leaving every day by lorry. One man allotted from our section each day. Spend evening in Tony Peterson's billets. Doc. is there too. Find them ensconced in the lap of luxury, with a large well-furnished room all to themselves. Owners of the place are comfortably fixed and they bring in little luxuries daily. This evening it is coffee, pan- cakes and jelly. Tony's one worry is lest he should break one of their delicate china cups. He says if he does break one the only way he can explain to the old lady how he came to do it will be by breaking another one.

**Nov. 27th–**The King comes to Mons and it is a gala day for the city. Great crowds v/elcome him as he drives through the streets. This ancient city has acclaimed many royal personages during its tumultuous history, but it is safe to say that no visiting monarch has ever received a greater welcome than that accorded the King of England to-day. Battalion concert in evening. Quite a good show, with refreshments during the interim provided from the regimental fund. The C.O. makes a good speech during the course of the evening.

**Nov. 28th–**Fellows were punting a football around outside the horse lines this morning when one of them broke the window of a nearby house. He went in and offered to pay for it but the owner, an old lady, refused to accept anything. All she had to say was a quite cheerful "C'est la guerre."

It seems likely that "C'est la guerre" will outlive the war a long time and perhaps become an estab- lished colloquialism. Spend evening once more at Tony's and Doc's billet. Billy Palmer also drops in. A young artilleryman billeted in the same house has a heavy fall and breaks a bone in his foot. His pal goes out and g'ets an ambulance. Old folks at the billet are much concerned over the accident. They persist in their hospitality and this evening they bring in coffee, biscuits and fruit.

**Nov. 30th–**Throughout the years of fighting, rations and mail reached battalion headquarters daily, without fail and in good order, but now the war is over something has gone wrong with the system. To-day no supplies arrived until late at night and it was a case of getting along on bully and hard tack. A supply train down the line is said to have been looted by civilians. One can hardly blame the poor devils, many of whom are half starving.

**Dec, 2nd–**Mason, A coy. original, drops round to the horse lines unexpectedly. Nobody had heard anything of him since the early Spring of '16 when he' was wounded. A coy. was coming through Kemmel at the time, it was at night, after four days in the line, when a shrapnel shell burst overhead and a small chunk of it hit Mason in the. Backside. It was Red Thompson who remarked afterwards, rather unfeelingly, that this was the one and only occasion on which Mason, nicknamed Fatty, had been known to make a quick move. Mason tells us that his wound was a blightie and he spent two vears in England. He is now with the military police, being attached to the 4th Division. M.P.'s are not a well-liked lot, many being tactless and too officious, but Mason's good nature and affability should ensure his popularity.

**Dec. 4th–**My leave comes through. Only six from the brigade in this leave batch. Ask the adjutant, when I am getting my warrant, how I am to get down to Boulogne. He tells me he has not the foggiest idea I will have to get there the best way I can. Set out for Blighty at 4:00 p.m., after a hurried bath. Jump a lorry bound for Valencienes. It is full of civilians who have been picked up by the driver. There are many civilians, men, women and children, on the roads these days returning to their homes, or what is left of them, and lorry drivers are doing what they can to help them out. Make good time and get to Valencienes by 6:'00 p.m. Fall in with one of the Princess Pats, also on leave, and we board a G. S. wagon bound for Raismes, the big railhead. We are joined by a youngster from the 3rd Divisional machine-gunners.

On arrival at Raismes we are informed that the leave train is expected to pull out from there at 4:00 a.m. the following day. Spend night in big shed at the station. There is a stove in the build- ing and we make tea and heat up some maconn- achie rations. The young machine-gunner and the Pat are excellent company and we spend a good evening together.

**Dec. 5th–**Up betimes, but. there is no sign of any leave train at 4:00 a.m. About ten o'clock a train loaded with captured German ammunition rolls slowly through the station. We ask one of the train crew (Canadian) where it is bound for and he shouts back "Arras." We thereupon board one of the open trucks. Later on, when the train stops to take on water, we find an empty box car, that is, empty apart from two French soldiers who seem to resent our intrusion. It is bitterly cold and when the train makes another stop we rustle wood and coke, also an empty can which we improvise into a brazier with our bayonets. The wood is damp and our first efforts to g-et a fire going fill the car with smoke, whereupon the two Frenchmen, who had been almost morosely silent, suddenly become excited and voluble. But the fire builder, the young machine-gunner, only grins and remarks, "We've got them talking anyhow." Before long his efforts are rewarded by a red-hot brazier and it is good to sit round it and soak up a little heat.

"If we had some ham we'd have some ham and eggs if we had some eggs," remarks the machine-gunner not very originally. It about sizes things up though, for the rations we brought with us are all gone with the exception of one tin of bully beef. Manage however to buy a loaf of bread from a civilian and that, and the bully, does us for supper. But every- thing is hunky-dory for we are on our way to Blighty and we talk happily far into the night- the two Frenchmen are now sound asleep in a corner of the car. The Pat, erstwhile lumberjack, regales us with a stock of Paul Bunyan yarns tells how Paul Bunyan's great blue ox once stopped on the trail, groaned, and made a deposit and the trail was blocked for three weeks. One wonders how and where the first Paul Bunyan tale was told the happy-go-lucky lumberjack who told it little realized how he was contributing to the folk- lore of a nation. The Pat then tells us of his boy- hood days in the Scotch Highlands how each boy had to carry a lump of peat to school in winter to put on the fire, but there happened to be a large. stack of peat not far from the school so many a chunk was taken off that stack instead of being- carried weary miles from the boys' homes. About midnight the train comes to a halt, and it remains halted for a couple of hours or more. We learn afterwards that the train crew had to be replaced, the first lot having got drunk on a case of whiskey they had scrounged somewhere.

**Dec. 6th–**Get into Arras in the early hours of the morning. Leave our train and jump another one, of empty box cars, headed Boulogne way. Once more rustle wood and coke and we soon have a good fire going. There are four of us in the car, two C.A.M.C.'s, the Pat and myself we lost the mach- ine-gunner in Arras. The two C.A.M.C men have a good supply of rations which they generously share v/ith us. Get into Boulogne at 5.00 p.m. In- formed that the boat does not sail until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow. The Pat and I decide to avoid the leave camp on the hill and we hunt around for a board- ing-house. As we are walking along the street a boy about eight years of age runs along behind us pimping for his sister, no doubt somewhere behind the scene. The boy is ill-clad on all sides in Boulogne is to be seen evidence of poverty–and the girl, like as not, has adopted her profession through necessity rather than choice. One can only hope that a civilization will emerge from this war which will no longer make it necessary for a small boy to pimp for his sister in order for them to keep body and soul together. The Pat and I eventually find a boarding-house, a clean comfort- able place. Turn in early, after supper in a nearby restaurant, and have a real sleep something we have not had for three nights.

**Dec. 17th–**Bed and breakfast at the boarding house leave nothing to be desired–and all for eight francs. Then down to the docks. Get our passes stamped for the 7th and catch the 9:00 o'clock boat. A smooth crossing to Folkstone. Arrive in London at 1.30 p.m. A hot bath at the Maple Leaf Club. Meet one of the Forfy-twas and we have supper together and then take a bus to the theatre area. Find all threatres booked up and it is impossible to get a seat. Eventually go to a revue"in the Australian Y.M.C.A... put on by twenty American sailors and twenty Scotch girls, with one or two professional actors thrown in. The revue apparently had first benn staged at some Scotch port and then brought down to London. The gobs, big husky men for the most part, are rather a wooden lot and the lassies have to carry most of the show. But we are on leave and have a good capacity for enjoyment, and we vote the show a good one. Spend an hour or so afterwards in the Eagle Hut, talking to Yank soldiers and sailors, and then to bed at the Maple Leaf Club.

**Dec. 18th-** Leave St. Pancras on the 11:45 a.m. train for my home in the Midlands, in a quiet and peaceful Derbyshire village. And so ends this war diary. If it has captured anything of the spirit of the 49th during these bitter, sweet, sad, happy years the writer will feel well rewarded.