# **MEMOIR**

**WATCHING HELL AT SANCTUARY WOOD  
From A Front-row Seat  
By DAVID ATHOL BARBOUR DCM, MM**

I am an original member of the 49th Battalion, the Edmonton Regiment, having joined on March 15, 1915, regimental number 433-070. I was discharged on March 15, 1919, exactly four years later.

My assignment was to 9th platoon, "C" company, and with the exception of interruptions from special services, wounds, etc. I had the good fortune to serve with them from the beginning to the end.

In order to visit my family at our old home in Alma, P.E.I., I returned on the Adriatic with the R.C.R. and was discharged in Halifax. Thereafter I returned to Edmonton to resume my railroading career.

Following our initial break-in experience at Plugstreet (sic), and shortly after we got acquainted with the Ypres Sector, I was assigned to a course at the trench mortar school. On March 14, 1916, I was transferred to the 7th Brigade Trench Mortar Unit and served with them until August 25, 1916, when I returned to the battalion.

This unit was intended to act as a form of mini-artillery to work with the infantry as close as possible to the front lines and from time to time operated with all four battalions of the 7th Brigade, 42nd, 49th, R.C.R., and PPCLI.

At first, we used the old flying-pig type of mortar shaped like a round ball with a long round shaft that was supposed to direct it safely on its way to the target. In actual use, it often failed for the contraption had a sneaky way of exploding anywhere at any time from the moment of leaving the gun until it hit the earth again. Since it often came straight back down into the firing pit it was fired by the crew from a safe remote spot. Needless to say, our presence was anything but welcome to the troops in the trenches, especially when Fritz was given to sending back several "sausage-type" mortars in retaliation. The word was that we bought our mortars from the French but that they were designed to use their propellent and not our cordite, thus the cause of most of the problem.

Later we were issued the famous "Stokes" gun which quickly became one of the favorite weapons of the infantry. It was highly mobile and required no great amount of concealment for it could be picked up and moved immediately after being fired. However, we tried to keep as far away from the trenches as possible in deference to the best interests of the people occupying them. After we were disbanded it was not long until the guns were moved into the hands of the battalions and nearly everyone was trained in their use.

All the following is taken from a daily diary that I kept for quite a long time. Only the dates with dramatic interest are included here and I pick it up as I was preparing to return from London leave:

**Frid. May 19, 1916:**A fine morning, but awful hot all day. Getting ready to go back to France in the morning, but I may take a notion to miss the train and have one more day in London.

**Sat. May 20th:**Up about eight, missed the train, reported at Victoria Station and got my pass extended until tomorrow (wise old-soldier tactics to postpone the inevitable as long as possible). Went to Richmond to see the Gardens. It was lovely. Flowers all in bloom and everything looking glorious. I am beginning to feel sorry that I must go back tomorrow.

**Sun. May 21st:**Reported to Victoria Station at 8:30 AM and caught a train for Folkstone. On arrival went aboard the Channel boat and after a two-hour wait we had a nice one-hour crossing. Another three-hour wait for the train and finally reached Poperinghe at about three in the morning. It was a one and a half hour walk to camp. As soon as I checked in I went to sleep and got in only two hours sleep before being awakened for breakfast. Shades of the pleasures of London past, we were back at the old grind again.

**Mon. May 22nd:**Up at seven - it's hell to have to go back to this routine; after ten wonderful days in dear old London. It is enough to break a man's heart to have to leave England again after eight months out here. I went back to 7th Brigade Trench Mortars today. In the evening, I went to see the boys at the Batt., they go into the trenches tonight. McHerness is in the machine gun section now. Libbie is on the stretcher bearer job. The only ones left of our old section that left Edmonton are Bob Whyte and C. Harris. Carberry was wounded the first time in at Hooge. He was shot through the face but we heard from him and he is getting along fine.

**Sat. May 27th:**I heard today at transport headquarters that Passey had been wounded since the Batt. went in the line. He was hit by shrapnel in the head, arm, and leg, though none were serious. A Fritz airplane came over the camp this evening. There were pieces of shells falling all around us from the barrage sent up to try to knock him down. Our artillery has been fairly quiet all day.

**Sun. May 28th:**About noon a Fritz plane came over the camp. Our anti-aircraft started shooting at him. Three shells fell right in the camp - hurting nobody. One of our planes was up at the time and he went after Mr. Fritz and made him beat it for home. This is the start of the air combat that would increase as the war wore on until it became almost a daily occurrence.

A trench mortar man was wounded this time, poor fellow, he was due on leave tomorrow. 49th had ten wounded during this trip.

**Mon. May 29th:**Fritz's planes were over here this morning at daybreak and the machine guns were shooting at him from the camp. About ten AM we saw one of our planes come down. I heard since that he was hit by one of Fritz's shells that destroyed his steering gear. He fell almost straight down from a considerable height and both pilot and observer were killed. L/Cpl Petherick of nine platoon had a brother killed yesterday while with the 1st Batt. near Hill 60. Half the battery went into the line this evening at Hooge. Just one year ago the 49th left Edmonton at about 8:00 PM via the Grand Trunk Pacific; in two sections about one-half an hour apart.

**Tuesday May 30th:**Rain this morning. Hope it will quit as we go into the trenches tonight. Left camp at 2:00 AM. Had to walk all the way through Ypres and out the Lille Gate. Reached Sanctuary Woods about 5:00 AM. Fritz was shelling along the road but did not come too close to us. We ended up in the same trenches as the 49th. Hills of 10th platoon was shot through the stomach last night. They did not think he would live at first but the last word is that he was doing fairly well. *(He came back later and was again shot through the stomach, how ironic, and he recovered again. He used to work for the C.N.R. in Edmonton while I was there and returned to work for them after the war. An indestructible guy.)*

**Wed. May 31st:**A fine morning. Fritz started throwing 5.9 shells about 8:00 AM but they were all going back behind the supports and not doing much damage. About 9:00 AM they threw over a "sausage" mortar, so called because they looked like one coming through the air. They are bigger than any of our mortars with a very high explosive that makes an awful mess when they hit. The first one this morning hit in front of the parapet making a gap about ten feet across. The second one went down in the supports and the third hit in the communication trench; strangely no one was hurt. He is putting a lot of big shells into where "C" company is. Our artillery was quiet all morning letting Fritz tear away and never answered once until after the third sausage hit. Then they let loose on Fritz and his sausage-machine factory and the way the shells were going over was a caution. Both big and small stuff was going over together, so thick that it sounded like one long shell. They seemed to be almost touching each other going through the air. A large number of shells landed around Fritz's sausage-machine thrower in about ten minutes. While it was going on we chimed in with ten old-style mortars in his front line. It was great fun while it lasted and no more sausages will come from that spot.

In the afternoon went down to see the "C" Co. boys who were in the front line a little to our left. Corp. Parsons (later C.S.M. and Mayor of Edmonton) and his machine gun crew went out last night across no-man's-land and put six bombs each into Fritz's front line. He got awful sore about it and threw a lot of stuff back but it mostly fell in front of the wire. The 49th is being relieved tonight by the Pats. After all the excitement of the day it was work party from eight to eleven then to sleep - what a hell of a war!

**Thurs. June 1st:**

Fritz started his dirty work again this morning; putting an awful dose of shells into Sanctuary Woods but none touching the front line. He threw one sausage but it was ten yards short of the front line and did not damage the parapet. Our guns were pretty quiet all day at this part of the line but there was a bit of strafing on the right between St. Eloi and Hill 60.

At about 6.00 PM Fritz shelled Ypres for about an hour. In the front lines not a sound could be heard. There did not appear to be anyone in Fritz's front line all day until seven in the evening. At about eleven o'clock he just raised particular hell with machine gun and rifle fire, then quiet for the rest of the night.

**Friday, June 2nd:**A lovely fine morning. Up at five to go for rations down to Maple Copse, back at six. Very quiet this morning, in fact too quiet to be healthy. (See picture showing part of crew making breakfast in front of entrance to mine sap). At about 8:30 AM Fritz started throwing sausage, keeping it up for about fifteen minutes. Then all hell did really break loose as he started in earnest. He was using every kind of machine he had for throwing explosives. For five hours he never let up and what a five hours that was. I shall never forget it. I never expected to get out alive.

There was a fellow with me from "D" Co. of the 49th named Albert Fowlie. There were three other 49ers on the battery with us but I do not know what happened to them, they were never seen since. Fowlie and I stuck together. We were in the front line when it started and we stayed right there. The PPCLI were holding the trenches at this point. They did not leave them - they were blown out of them. The little spot where Fowlie and I were was the only section not blown sky high.

For the last three hours of the bombardment, there was not one living man in the trench to my left for three hundred yards, and only a few on our right. We had to stay there for it was safer than to try to get back to the second line under that fire.

At EXACTLY fifteen minutes to 2:00 PM Mr. Fritz came over his own parapet. Fowlie and I joined two Pats - one named Kelly - and opened fire on them before they reached our trench. Only a few came over at the Birdcage. The main attacks were on the left and right as they apparently tried a pincer-like tactic in order to surround and capture the survivors of the bombardment. Each man was equipped with an entrenchment tool and rifle. When they reached our trench those on the left started shooting liquid fire. Observing a large group on our right, to avoid capture we headed for Charing Cross. What a job it was as they had us almost surrounded and we had to make a run for it. I continued firing with the others and finally ended up at Geurock Road. I do not know how I got back without being hit for there were many Germans shooting at me all the time.

All the trenches were blown flat. The woods were full of dead and wounded from the shell fire. All that were able to get back to the second line did so. We blocked the communication trench and lined the parapet, or what was left of it. Every man left of the Pats and all other men present from any other unit able to hold a rifle were shooting to beat the band. Well, we held them at that part of the line and they never got halfway to the second line at that point. They broke through the CMR’s line on our right and got into the only communication trenches that we had for coming in and out and a few reached Maple Copse.

The CMR were hit the worst. We were told the 1st and 4th Bund were almost wiped out and there were hardly any survivors left in the destroyed trenches to stop them when Fritz came over. The few that were left fell back to the "strong points" and made a very determined stand even when nearly surrounded.

Major Boyle of the 49th was with the trench mortars at this time and stationed in Maple Copse. He promptly organized a bombing party from among the CMR and Pats present — he put all available present to work regardless of unit or assignment. The group was sent forward to clear the enemy out of the communication trench leading forward to Sanctuary Wood. They had quite a scrap for it and there were a lot of dead Germans lying in this trench in addition to many of our own men when it was over. Another party was organized and sent toward the rear to make sure that the trench was clear all the way out — I was elected number one bayonet man for this group.

At about 4:00 PM with a work party I went down to Zillebeke Bund for ammunition and witnessed one of the most stirring sights of the war. A train of about six artillery ammunition carriers each drawn by six horses with three mounted drivers suddenly burst forth out of the Lille Gate at full gallop. They headed up the road past Shrapnel Corner and turned off the road about a half-mile to their concealed guns. From their first appearance the Germans threw everything they had at them. They unloaded and got back out and I did not see one of them knocked out. This was one of the most courageous acts I ever saw during the war; those drivers really had a lot of guts.

Anticipating a counter-attack, the Germans shelled the roads and communication trenches to keep reinforcements from coming up but they got through just the same. The 42nd and the 49th were the first to arrive. The 49th came up directly overland without attempting to use the communication trenches. It was a big gamble for if it had not been done quietly and the Germans had become aware of what was going on the potential for enormous casualties was immediately evident. They lined up in open battle formation behind the Pats and sat tight until the order to advance came just after daybreak on the 3rd.

**Sat. June 3rd:** Another lovely fine morning. The enemy artillery is still something awful. Ours is just beginning to wake up and now it is Fritz who is catching hell, but he still holds our old front line and a few pieces of the supports.

Just at daybreak the 49th made their first attack and drove the enemy out of Warrington Ave. What happened thereafter is well covered by the historians, but for me it was not trying to be almost on the sidelines watching my friends and pals undergoing their first blood bath. The report was that they lost nearly 80% of all ranks and that just about wiped out the fine battalion that left Edmonton in such high hopes for a short war.

Their losses included such well-known and respected as Major Weaver, Capt. McClud, Capt. Pinder, Capt. Gregory, and Lieut. Arthurs, all of whom were wounded. Lieutenants Scott, Wilson and Carthew were killed. In "C" Company Sgt. McCleod of 9th, Sgt. Morgan of 11th, and Sgt. Wiseman of 12th were wounded; also CSM Miles, Cpl. Smith and Cpl. Brown. There were many others but I don’t know their names.

The guns kept going nearly all day, it was really something terrific. That night our crew was relieved and went back to reserve. We helped carry out a lot of wounded on our way. We got a little sleep and a rest for we sure needed it.

**Sun. June 4th.**The scrap is still going on. Our boys caught hell in the first bombardment but Mr. Fritz is sure catching it now. The trench mortar battery I am on is going in again this evening.

We started at 6:00 PM and are taking a Stokes gun up with us.

We were almost at the end of the communication trench at Zillebeke Village when we were joined by Major Boyle en route to Halfway House, a strong point located at the end of the trench at the China Wall, when Fritz started shelling the communication trenches to keep reinforcements from coming up. He threw both shrapnel and H.E. At the end of the trench we had to go up the road and cross an open field. We did not expect we would all get through without being hit but we made a run for it and got there safely. Soon the gun was set up and ready for business.

The artillery quieted down again; Fritz’s attack did not get very far for our guns caught him this time. He eased down a little after dark but our guns kept pounding away all night.

**Mon. June 5th.**Things have quieted down a lot. Some artillery but nothing like it was. The whole brigade is to be relieved tonight, or at least what is left of it.  
**NOTE:** Field Marshal Earl Kitchner drowned off the Orkney Islands, Scotland.

My gun was relieved at about 8 PM. We walked into Ypres and faced a few shells going in but we got out safe. After being fed at Brigade HQ we caught a ride back to camp arriving about 12 midnight. Not all the boys who went in with us came out. Some were killed and others are missing or wounded.

**Tues. June 6th.**Got ready to move. At 3 PM the whole brigade marched away together. The 7th Brigade Brigadier was at the camp and watched. He is all tickled pink with the scrap we put up to hold Sanctuary Woods. We marched through Poperinghe back to a place called Steenvoorde about eight miles away. We are in a barn with lots of clean straw. Located in a woods, prettiest place we have ever had.

**Thurs. June 8th.**Nothing to do but sleep, clean up, and try to forget the horror of the past several days. This place looks so much like my old home in Alma and Montrose, PEI.

**Sat. June 11th.**Went over to see some of the boys at the 49th. Not many of the old lot left and those remaining now have corporal and/or sergeants stripes. They had a draft of four hundred and fifty men from the 66th Battalion.

**Sat. June 17th.**While out of the line, walked down the road in the direction of the 49th and stopped to enjoy a big fight between about ten civilians. It was great fun as they mixed it up with one woman trying to stop the fray. At least it was a change from the fighting we had almost gotten used to.

**Thurs. June 22nd.**Back close to the line and it seems natural to hear the guns again but none of us were breaking our necks to come back so we could hear them. Mr. Fritz threw over about a dozen shells near the camp this morning. There was a scrap in the air over the camp. One machine fell down but it was too far away to identify. Slept out in the field because the rats were too thick in the hut.

**Sat. June 24th.**Heard today that Capt. Liversay was killed last night by a bomb. He was the first officer of 9th platoon and the finest I ever drilled under—he was one of the best.

**Sun. June 25th.**Leave for trenches at 6 PM. Went into the line by The Belgium Chateau. Just as we got to Ypres while crossing the bridge of the canal, a shell dropped right in the middle of the road in front of us. He kept them coming thick and fast for about a half an hour. Soon as he quit we reported to Brigade HQ in the ramparts. Lots of bombardment during the night.

**Mon. June 26th.**Left the Ramparts at about 10.30 PM behind a company of the Pats. Stopped at Halfway House from where part of the gun crew, including me, was assigned to Sanctuary Wood; the other went to Hooge. At one point it appeared we had all lost our way. The Pat officer inquired if anyone knew the way up the Corduroy Road to Sanctuary Woods. Someone said that Barbour knew this area like the back of his hand and I was immediately appointed as guide.

We proceeded up the Corduroy Road until we hit a trench that was completely new to me. It was about ten feet deep and eight wide and looked like nothing we had ever seen before. Fearing that we had fouled up and gotten behind the enemy lines, all were ordered to stop, keep quiet—no talking.

I then proceeded to get into the trench and prepared for the worst as I noticed a built-in firing step with row on row of German potato-masher bombs laid out ready for instant action. Cautiously, I turned a bay and was faced with the welcome sight of a Scotty inside a "Canadian dugout" (a sheet of corrugated iron and a rubber sheet). He was heating some water to make his tea and we did not disturb him further after asking for directions. It turned out to be one of the trenches taken from us and showed the hard work and skill the Germans used to make it defendable—they were terrific diggers.

It was almost breaking day when we reached the crew we were to relieve and they had only just about enough time to get out before they would be spotted by the Germans. As soon as it was light Fritz let loose with his artillery. The 49th are in this time having arrived last night.

**Tues. June 27th.**At about 4.00 AM Fritz opened up with a heavy bombardment and the way they came over was a corker. My luck seems to still be with me. A 5.9 shell landed right in the trench almost At my feet. Of the four of our gun crew two were killed and one badly wounded by this shell. All I got was a small piece of shrapnel in the knee and a sore nose and black eye from a piece of board blown up from the trench mat. The men killed took most of the effect and no doubt contributed to our survival.

A piece of shrapnel pierced halfway through a small Bible I was carrying in my upper left-hand tunic pocket. I have it today as one of the most important of my war souvenirs—without it I would have surely been killed.

The 49th were back in with the members of the first big draft of the 66th from Edmonton. Their baptism of fire during this big shoot resulted in many casualties—they became veterans damn fast.

After the bombardment stopped we thought Fritz was coming over but he did not try it—we were ready for him if he had. As there was no communication trench we had to stay put and not show ourselves until it got dark.

Night came at last and I took the gun barrel, all that was left of our equipment, back to the supports and left it there. The wounded man was able to walk so we started for the dressing station at Zillebeke dugouts. We had other guns at the strong-point and so on the way out we reported in there. They had not known about us until then. We were almost out when Fritz opened up on the roads. He caught quite a lot of horses but we got through. The doctor bandaged us up. I was not very bad but he sent me to the hospital anyway. We had to walk to Ypres and caught a motor ambulance to Poperinghe.

**Wed. June 28th.** Feeling much better. Had a bath and change of dry clothes. Nothing to do except take it easy. Some good cooked grub here for a change. Went to bed about seven in the evening but could not sleep very good. For the first time since I have been in France I would get about half asleep and start to dream of those shells bursting all around us and I would awake with a jump and in a cold sweat, but I think I will be all right with a few days rest.

**Thur. June 29th.** Nothing to do so asked to be sent back to the trench mortar camp today. I’ll be just as well there as in the hospital for I won’t have to go in the trenches for about three weeks anyway so I would rather be at the camp where I know the boys. Some 49th were with me on the way here but they were worse than I was so they are all on their way to dear old England. Included was CSM Parsons who used to be corporal of my 9th platoon section. He got hit with shrapnel. Sgt. Seabrooke was hit in the face with shrapnel. There were several of the new men who got hit on their first time in the line. The motor ambulance took me back to the camp.

**Sat. July 1st.** “Dominion Day” One year ago today I was having a good time in England but did not know it. In the afternoon I went over to see the boys. Some of my platoon got it. Watkins was killed, Leo Maile was hit pretty bad. “C” company was being paid so I fell in line and got thirty francs and headed for home.

We had good news from the boys up front today. They are raising hell with Fritz all along the line and I think the big attack is on its way. It is fine to listen to it and think how Mr. Fritz will be squealing for he sure is getting it handed to him down the line a ways. It never eased up a bit till almost daybreak, the whole earth was a continual tremble.

**Sun. July 2nd.** Good news from down the line today. In the evening about eight there was a big scrap started up on the left of Hooge. From our camp we could see our guns flashing and the shrapnel bursting. There were a lot of signals going up, red lights and green lights. It was a sight. We went to sleep about ten PM and an enemy plane came over. We listened to it for a few minutes and heard a bomb coming down through the air so fast that it whistled just like a shell. The first one hit about a quarter of a mile from us. Mr. Fritz flew right over our heads then and dropped another one on the other side of us near the 42nd lines but I don’t think he hurt anyone.

**Mon. July 3rd.** Two more men from 9th platoon came to the trench mortar unit today, Wollard and McNaughton. Artillery raising hell up around Sanctuary Woods.

**Tues. July 4th.** It was payday at Brigade HQ. I did not expect to get any as I was paid thirty francs two days ago but I was first man into the office and he never noticed my pay book. The next man was Crozier and it was noticed that he had been paid the day before and he was turned down. I had my fifteen francs in my pocket and was out the door by that time. The paymaster called for me to come back but I was beating it down the road. We enjoyed putting one over on the brass.

**Thurs. July 6th.** Brigade Sports were held this afternoon near "A" camp not far from the 49th camp. There was lots of fun. The 49th did not get as many prizes as they did last spring but they got their share. A 42nd major was thrown off his horse and hurt badly.

**Sat. July 8th.** I got put on the peg in the afternoon for insolence to an NCO but I only got a calling down.

**Sun. July 9th:**Church parade at 10 AM, ready to go into the trenches at 8 PM. I am in charge of one of the guns this trip. A big bombardment started at 5 PM in or about Sanctuary Woods; it is making an awful lot of smoke that we could see from the camp before we left. Fritz threw the customary shrapnel over the road while we were going in but did not hurt us. When we reached our assigned trench we set up the gun and since it was now daylight we had to stay under cover all day.

**Mon. July 10th:**We have a dugout of sorts but not up to much. Fritz started shelling about 3 PM just a little to our left. He was throwing some real big stuff and kept it up for about an hour.

In the evening just about dark our fellows started something on the left where the Imperials are. They started throwing the new liquid fire bombs. As soon as the first one hit Fritz started shooting up green and red flares for his artillery to get into action. It was the prettiest fireworks I ever saw, there were lights of all colors; then the shrapnel and H.E. began to come. I think they chased Fritz out of his front lines. It was two hours before it stopped.

**Thur. July 13th:**Fritz started his dirty work about 12.30 PM and before he finished he put one through our dugout where we had the barrel of the Stokes gun at the time, putting it out of business. In the evening we had to take it down to Halfway House and bring back a new one.

**Sat. July 15th:**Fritz did not bother us till about 12.30 PM when he started throwing some big ones around near our dugout. He kept it up for about a half-hour then he changed to someplace else and gave the front lines hell all afternoon. We worked on our emplacement till about 2 AM then went to our dugout intending to have a few hours sleep before daybreak but there was no such luck for us.

We had been in the dugout about fifteen minutes when **BANG!** a "coal-box" (the big howitzer shell that gave off a lot of black smoke) hit the trench about fifty yards from us so we beat it out of the dugout to the trench. The second one hit within fifteen feet of the front of our dugout but did not hurt anyone. The next half-dozen were down at the other end of the trench, then he started coming up our way again and dropped one right in the trench just around the corner not more than fifteen feet from me.

The trench was nearly full of men, all RCR's. Two were killed and seven wounded from this one shell, one was an officer. He did not bother us again but there was no sleep after that straffing.

**Mon. July 17th:**Our artillery is pounding Fritz down around Kemmel, must be something big on. In the evening we were relieved by the crew from Halfway House and took our gun up to Sanctuary Woods as there is something special on coming up there. It was to be a bombing raid on Fritz's trench. It was called off because the moon was too bright for a surprise attack. They had planned to go over at three places and take prisoners. The Pats were the only ones who got to his trench. We could see it from where we were. It was some shower of bombs and I bet Fritz moved out of there quicker than he ever did before. We heard they got some prisoners but not sure. We expected the Pats would catch it from his artillery for that stunt but nothing came back but a few rifle grenades.

**Tues. July 18th:**Fritz throwing heavy shells around in the evening about seven o'clock. He started in on the Pats over at Mr. Sorrel and Hill 60. Kept it up for about two hours. The Pats got off lucky with only a few wounded but I heard that the 13th Battalion had about two-hundred casualties.

**Fri. July 21st:**The 49th are not out yet. They had a pretty good trip with only a few casualties. Sgt. Petherick who used to be in my old section in 9th platoon was hit by a bullet just above the heart but will recover.

**Sat. July 22nd:**49th still in reserve at Ypres. There is a story going around that our C.O. (Griesbach) is going to leave us for a bigger job. I hope it is not true.

**Mon. July 24th:**An observation balloon was stationed right near our camp. When we first saw it we allowed it about five days to live and sure enough as we came out of the picture show tonight **BANG!** a six-inch shell hit about two hundred yards from Mr. Balloon. They had it down at the time but let it up before the next shell hit. The cable was attached to a motor lorry and they started down the road to beat the band letting it out all the time until it was above the clouds. Fritz threw about eight shells, one of which went right into the farm yard where the balloon was kept and killed two horses and wounded about ten men.

**Wed. July 26th:**On the move at 10 AM. Back to Steenvoorde again. In a better farm than last time right near a big wood. The farmers are busy making hay these days and the smell of the new hay makes me homesick.

**Tues. Aug. 1st:**Things pretty quiet up front just now. Don’t hear much artillery going on. The model gun emplacement that we have been working on for several days took first prize. Each brigade built one, then the General came around to inspect them and he said ours was the best.

**Thur. Aug. 3rd:**About 3 PM about thirty of our planes went over to see Fritz, have not heard what kind of luck they had. Started for the trenches at 8:30 PM. I am in charge of a crew this time again. I have Wollard, McMath, and McIntyre of the 49th with me. We passed the 49th on the way in. They will stop at Zillebeke dugouts tonight, but we go right on up tonight to where our gun is at Lover’s Walk.

this time. Our artillery shelled around Mt. Sorrel when we were coming in and they are certainly giving Mr. Fritz hell.

**Fri. Aug. 4th:**Second Anniversary of the start of the war. Fritz pretty quiet all day, some heavy stuff on our left but that was all. Our guns never give him any peace at all, they pounded their trenches all day and he never says a word.

**Sat. Aug. 5th:**Nothing from Fritz but our guns keep it up. In the evening the scouts came in and reported that there was a Fritz working party of about one hundred men out in front putting up wire. An officer ordered me to bring the gun out into no-man’s land about two hundred yards from Fritz. We took fifteen rounds of ammunition and set up the gun in an old trench and got everything ready and threw those fifteen rounds over to Fritz in about one minute's time and what a noise. About six of them exploded in the air about ten feet above ground. I will bet that those who could scattered pretty quick.

**Sun. Aug. 6th:**Fritz still very quiet as our guns continue to pound him all the time. He doesn’t reply for he has more than he can chew down at the Somme. Our planes are after him too. They have almost chased him off the map. About twenty of ours were over his lines tonight. His Ack-Ack guns fired at them till they were tired or else out of shells for they quit and let them fly where they liked without bothering them.

Our planes got two more of his balloons last night. There was nothing but a puff of smoke and they were gone. Now when he sees our planes coming he pulls them down — not taking any chances.

**Tues. Aug. 8th:**An awful hot day. Fritz threw over a few shells but got twice as many back for his trouble. About dark he made a gas attack a little way on our left but I don’t think he made anything out of it. Our artillery gave him hell.

**Wed. Aug. 9th:**Our guns still pounding away on his trenches all day. In the afternoon I threw some mortars just to register, they were good shots. Lot of bombing going on all night. The 42nd went out and bombed him out of an advanced post.

**Thur. Aug. 10th:**Fritz’s artillery busy registering around Mt. Sorrel and Hill 60. I think he is going to start something. Also threw a lot of sausage today. The 49th were relieved tonight, they had many casualties. Sgt. Gilbertson was killed the last afternoon in, also Ptes. Hayter and Miller, all out of 10th platoon.

**Fri. Aug. 11th:**Fritz started in early with quite a few big ones into the support trenches. Put over a few trench mortars in the afternoon and a lot of big ones into Sanctuary Woods about 6 PM and our guns let loose on him and soon closed him up. About 10 PM he threw trench mortars and sausages at Mt. Sorrel for about one-half an hour.

We were relieved at 1.30 AM and started home via Halfway House and Ypres. We expected to get a ride from there but we got stung and had to walk all the way home.

**Fri. Aug. 18th:**Back to the trenches tonight and I hope for the last time in the Ypres Salient. Had a good trip in arriving at Halfway House about 10 PM. In luck this time for my crew stays there this time, the others go up front.

**Sun. Aug. 30th:**Got orders at noon to clean things up extra good for tonight we are to be relieved by the Imperials. Kinross and I had to go to Ypres to guide them in. They were late coming and did not arrive until twelve midnight. They were the slowest lot I have ever seen. It was after 2 AM when they were ready to leave for the front lines. Our crews were so late being relieved that they had not time to get the guns out before daylight and had to leave them at Halfway House until the next night. Had to walk all the way home and stopped at the first farm house to get some eggs.

**Tues. Aug. 22nd:**Getting ready to leave the Ypres Salient and, I hope, for the last time. We have been here for five months today and I never missed a trip in the trenches.

**Thur. Aug. 24th:**Ready to move at 10 AM. Left camp for we don’t know where, but we are on our way. Passed through Oederdom, Steenvoorde, to Winnezeele and stopped just outside of town.

**Fri. Aug. 25, 1916:**We are about fed up with this job so five of us went back to the 49th Battalion at noon – goodbye trench mortars.

With these excerpts from the dairy that I maintained faithfully each day during the past months, I finish with my thoughts about the action in and around Sanctuary Woods; what a blessed-sounding name to give to such a place of utter and continuous horror.

If the readers are interested, I will be most happy to probe deeper into my dairy and relate the events leading up to and my participation in the brutal Somme Battle; another of the grist mills into which so much of the flower of British manhood was ground to dust in a vain attempt to achieve an early victory – one that never materialized.

**Dave Barbour**

**THE GRINDING SOMME** by  
 *David Athol Barbour DCM MM*

Upon *my* return to the 49th from a tour of duty with the trench mortars, I was struck by the many and varied changes that had taken place in the personnel of the Regiment. So few of the old boys were left and none of the original "C" Company officers. Jack Wallace had now become our CSM and a stranger was Sergeant of #9 Platoon. I was surrounded by new faces and we had the job of getting to know each other all over again.

Having given up the trench mortars, it was back to the daily life of a foot soldier. Much drilling and training to rebuild a fine fighting outfit that had been so badly mauled at the Ypres Salient. I pick up from my diary at this point.

**MON AUG 25, 1916:** Back to 9th Platoon with the usual routine of rifle inspection and drilling each morning and afternoon trying to put us back into shape. There was some training in open-order fighting. Then to a bomb school to practise other types of attack and to throw live bombs.

**THURS AUG 29:** After several days of rain, more drilling in the morning. In the afternoon I had a pass to Cassel. It is a little town right on top of a high hill where you can see for many miles in any direction. Andy Latimer was with me, we had supper there - sure a beautiful spot.

**WED SEPT 6:** There are more rumors around again that we are about to move but no one knows just where. Some think the Somme and others suggest other places. Rumors seem to be a big part of a soldier’s life. We never know until we get there.

**THURS SEPT 7:** Was made a Corporal today. I never had any great desire for stripes, being content to do my work and let the other fellow do his. Our CO, Major J.B. Harstone DSO OBE, called me to HQ and explained the situation to me. He pointed out that wherever we were going it was sure to be tough. We would probably have a choice of one or two alternatives, either get killed or badly wounded and go to hospital. In the former case it did not matter much but if wounded it was much better to be an NCO and avoid the drudgery of fatigue and KP while in the hospital or convalescent base. How right he proved to be. He was without doubt one of our crack officers, later to be promoted to LCol and to receive several decorations.

We received orders to pack up, clean up the billet and be ready to leave. At 17:15 we set out on a march of about eight kilometers to a small town where we were to get a train. We had to wait three hours until they could get it ready. They put forty of us in one box car, each box car was planned and marked for either forty men or eight horses. We were packed in like sardines in a can, we could barely move. They had us loaded at about 01:50 hours and we tried to sleep as best we could until daybreak.

**FRI SEPT 8, 1916:** When I awakened, it was daylight and we were just pulling into a town. When the train stopped I climbed up on the top of the car where I could stretch my legs. I rode up there to the next stop which took nearly an hour. Then some of the other boys came up as well. That left a little more room inside for the others. On reaching our destination we had to walk two miles to our billets. The farmers around here all live in villages and the country looks just like the Canadian prairies. We are about thirty miles from the firing line but we can hear the sound of a big scrap quite plainly and I think we will be in it before too long.

**SAT SEPT 9:** Taking it easy today. The guns never stop down here in this part, they keep firing day and night. We are going to move again in the morning so we will get nearer to the big scrap every day.

**SUN SEPT 10:** Up early getting ready to move. After breakfast the farmer started raising hell about someone stealing his chickens. It was great fun as he was jabbering away the boys were poking fun at him. Finally he went and got one of the officers and told him about it – I think they paid him off to pacify him.

**MON SEPT 11:** Up at five, breakfast at five thirty and moved out at eight. Had a big hill to climb, just about a mile long.

We were just coming to a village called Talmas when one of the members of the advance party shot himself. I don’t know how he did it, whether on purpose or not, but anyway he did not live a minute. They left me behind with four men to bury him. We dug a grave in the village cemetery, first where the priest told us to but when we hit a casket and knew we were disturbing someone else’s eternal peace we moved over and dug again. We put up a wooden cross with his name and number on it and hurried to catch up with the Battalion at a village called Rubempre.

We never learned how this soldier’s death was carried in the records, or how his family was notified. However, we all agreed that he too was a battle casualty. Some men broke down under the stress and strain and were unable to carry on – death by any means, including self-destruction, seemed their only way out. He had all our sympathy and understanding.

**TUES SEPT 12:** Marched away from the billets at 0630 hrs, only made about six kilometres today. Stopped at Vadencourt in huts this time.

**WED SEPT 13:** On the way again at 0630, only about eight kilometres to go today. Our camp this time is just outside the town of Albert. No barns or tents this time. We are in an open field with only our waterproof sheets for a roof. The rest of our shelters were made up of anything movable in the vicinity that we could get our hands on, one way or another.

We are not far from Fritz’s old front line where the big push started the first of July. The artillery is something fierce here all the time, never stops day or night. It is hilly around here and from the top of a hill you can see for miles. We are able to see shells bursting near the front line. I was on top of the hill tonight watching the guns and the shells, it was some sight. The side of the hill and across the valley from us was one continual flash of fire, we are expecting something big to start.

**THURS SEPT 14:** Still in the same camp, not moving today for when we do we will go straight into the trenches. The artillery is going like mad, not letting up for a minute. Fritz threw about a dozen shells into Albert this morning. I have read pieces in the paper telling about the towns down in this district being so badly shelled and blown to pieces, but they are not a patch on Ypres. Albert is hardly hurt at all except for the church, it is pretty badly smashed.

Tonight is the big night. The artillery opened at 1900 hrs all along the front and old Fritz will have the biggest job on his hands he has ever had before. I was up on top of the hill again when it started and I could see it all. It was some sight, every hill and valley was alive with artillery and every gun is talking. Our boys go over the top in the morning and I am quite sure that Fritz can not stop them.

**FRI SEPT 15:** A fine morning, the guns did not stop all night. We have good news from up front, everything was a success. The Canadians did fine and gained all the ground that they had started out to take, and took also a lot of prisoners. A lot of the prisoners passed here on their way out this morning.

We are standing to, ready to go in when the order comes. We will take no packs, fighting order only, and thirty eight hours of rations. The officers have their orders now but they have not told us what they are.

We leave here at 1500 and march as far as the chalk pit and then wait until 1715. At this point the officers give us our orders – at 1815 we go over the top. We have just time to get to the front line and go straight over. At 1730 we started and only went about five hundred yards when we came under Fritz’s curtain of fire. The Pats were ahead of us. They marched in lines of platoons, fifty yards apart. I watched them all the way in. The shells were falling all around them. Two or three times a shell landed in the center of a platoon and when the smoke and dust cleared away we could see about a third of them were missing, the remainder neither turned nor hesitated. They kept going straight ahead. Soon they reached the front line, or what was supposed to be the front line. It was only a ditch and a few shell holes, just before it was time to go over.

I don’t know how the 49th got along except for my own Company. We were to support the Pats and we advanced in single file. “C” Company was leading and I was right up at the front of the line with #9 Platoon. I could not see much of what went on behind us. Twice a 5.9 shell landed right in the middle of the platoon but our orders were to get up there and everyone who was not hit had to keep on going. The stretcher bearers stayed behind to dress our wounded. (Cantin tells me that this was the point at which he met up with a “coal box” 9.2 shell that knocked him out of the battle.)

At last we reached our destination and found it to be only a bit of a ditch about one hundred yards behind the Pats. Well, we lined up in the trench and counted off to find that there were only fourteen men left in our platoon. We lost Corporals Williams and Donahoe, Libbie, Smith, Hamilton, Capio, Stevenson, Watson, Hunter, Harper, McKinnon, Sharp, White, McDonald and others but I have not got their names just now. I think that #9 was the worst hit in the Battalion.

At about 1815 the 49th and 42nd went over the parapet. Old Fritz was watching and he saw them start. Here and there his machine guns began to spit and he started rapid fire. He must have been nervous for he only stuck around for a few seconds and before the boys had gone fifty yards he turned and ran. Ran so fast that the devil could not have caught up with him. Five minutes after the Pats went over the top we moved up into the trench they had left. The #9 Platoon Sgt was hit just as we were getting into the trench so I was the only NCO left in our platoon. We had to stay here until 2015, then we moved up to where the Pats were and right on through them about a hundred yards. We dug in on the side of the slope.

We continued in extended order and searched all the shell holes and dugouts for hiding Germans that the Pats might have missed. We had a sunken road to cross. There was about an eight foot bank on each side and on one side the Germans had deep dugouts all along it. In one of these we found thirty eight unwounded Germans and twelve wounded, we called out to the rest of the platoon went on. They started coming out of that dugout, one at a time, each with his mitts up and squealing like pigs. They thought we were going to shoot them right there. They were scared, they nearly had us scared as well when we saw twenty come out and they were still coming. They were all too willing to be taken prisoner – there was no danger in them.

One of the Germans kept pointing down a ladder that apparently led us to an underground room. No one could understand him and fearing a booby trap we passed it up. Later, the engineers checked it out and found a huge German soldier seated behind a table. He had died of wounds and was badly bloated. The easy way out was to just blow the entrance in and leave him to his eternal rest.

We lined all the prisoners up on the road and searched them, then sent four men to take them to the rear. We had three of our own wounded on stretchers and we made the prisoners carry them out.

As soon as they were on their way I rejoined my platoon. Then I was ordered with one man to go out front to find out where Fritz was and to get in touch with the company on our left since there was quite a gap between us. I very quickly found where Fritz was as well as the company on our flank.

I was coming back in when a bullet hit the bolt of my rifle, it splintered and hit me in the leg and buttocks. I thought for a moment that my leg was broken for the pain was something fierce. But it soon eased down a bit and I scrambled back to the trench and had it bandaged. Another “C” Coy man was in the trench and he had been shot through the arm so he and I started to the dressing station. I could not walk far before my leg started to get stiff. When we arrived at the station they dressed my wound and put me on a stretcher. We had to wait about half an hour for an ambulance. When it came they put four of us in it and away we went for the casualty clearing station at Albert. They had another look at my wound and then it was on to a big hospital further back of the lines.

**SAT SEPT 16, 1916:** A fine morning. The doctors had a look at my wounds and fixed me up again. About noon I was put on a train to go down to the base. There is a whole train load of wounded, mostly Canadians. We arrived at Etaples some time in the morning and so soon to bed and asleep.

**SUN SEPT 17:** When I awakened it was nearly noon and I found myself in a nice comfortable bed in a big long tent. There were two or three pretty nurses all in white flying around. I did not know if I was dreaming for awhile. Soon after, the doctor came along. He looked me over and told the nurse what was to be done to me. He marked my sheet, ENGLAND – dear old Blighty.

**MON SEPT 19:** Still in bed at the same place. A train load of wounded is to leave for England today and I expect to go with them. Sure enough they came for me at eleven o’clock, carried me out and put me in a motor ambulance for a five minute ride to the train. We were three quarters of an hour from there to Boulogne where we were right on board the boat and sailed at five o’clock. The crossing was a bit rough and took one hour and fifteen minutes to reach Dover. Had to wait at the docks for three hours as there were two boats ahead of us and we had to wait our turn. We were on the train again by one o’clock and I fell asleep and did not waken until I was being unloaded at the hospital.

**WED SEPT 20:** I am in the Middlesex War Hospital, Mapsbury, near St. Albans. It is a fine place, used to be an asylum but it was turned into a hospital. Slept until noon. I am the only 49er in this ward but there are a few from other Canadian battalions.

**SAT SEPT 30:** I have been here ten days now and am getting along just fine. My leg is nearly healed. I have been up for three days, walking around. Yesterday I went for a ride to Golders Green, then I got off the bus and took the Underground to London. That started a fairly long vacation from the fighting war for me. As soon as I no longer needed hospitalization and was fully convalescent I asked to be sent back to the Canadian Base at Bramshott.

Since I still had two stripes I was not subject to any fatigue or kitchen duty (thanks to Major Hardstone, what a right guy!). I was assigned to various schools including where I went through all the old-line steps taken to make a soldier out of a recruit. It was boring and tiresome and I did not apply myself too well. Upon leaving it was shown on my report that I had all the qualifications to become a Lance Corporal; since I was already a full Corporal it didn’t really make too much sense.

I hung around the 21st Reserve with a lot of the old boys who were not going back to France and were instead awaiting return to Canada. For some reason they seemed loathe to let them go back home; they might as well have been returned to civilian life for all the good they were doing at Bramshott.

In this rather cushy setup I passed up the long drag the unit had to the chalk at Vimy and the big shoot that Cantin described in his memoirs. Then the battle of the mud holes at Passchendaele took place and my old chum from the trench mortars, C. J. Kinross, won the VC. Needing manpower after the awful mauling the 49th took at that hellish place, they had to scrape the bottom of the barrel for reinforcements. I found myself fit for travel and I was shipped off to France for another go at it.

I rejoined the 49th as they were struggling out of the dirt and filth and they were a sorry looking lot for sure. Mudcaked, an inch thick all over them, their faces showed the results of the stress and strain of the awful experience.

There was just nobody left that I knew from the original Battalion except Bob White and Al Cantin. All of the officers were gone. Bob was now CSM, Al Cantin had been returned from a cushy job as an instructor at the 3rd Canadian Division Training School at Ferfay. He was back in #12 Platoon as a private again, a situation that he corrected by getting his three stripes back in short order.

With the help of a new draft and all the old timers they could dig out of the numerous rear area jobs where they had mistakenly thought they would be good for the duration, it was to rebuild again from the ground up. Displaying the same spirit as their predecessors, the new hands blended with the old sweats and very shortly the battalion was back in business.

I was put back into my old platoon, the 9th, and made a platoon sergeant, something I never had dreamed would happen to me.

It was at this time that I got acquainted with my new Company Commander, Captain Stanley Davies MC & Bar. He was a veteran of both the Somme and Vimy Ridge and had acquitted himself well in both battles. He was a fine organizer and soon had our Company in fighting order. After more distinguished service with the 49th we were all sorry to see him leave to become a Brigade Major. We rated him as one of the best Coy Cmdrs we ever had.

We were held out of the line and subjected to intensive training in open warfare tactics. We knew by instinct that we were being readied for another big one, but it would be a different kind of scrap this time.

After they thought that we were about well done on both sides, we started the long trek south. It was all very hush-hush. No one asked where we were going for the reason no one would or could tell our destination. We marched at night and slept during the day. This was going to be one major troop movement Fritz would not know about.

It was beautiful weather all the way and we had some rather good times at the various towns that we stopped close to. Cantin was back in the Sergeants Mess as Platoon Sergeant of #12 Platoon. He was up to his old tricks. We sent him in to town for some eggs and he returned with a full load inside and a broken bag with no eggs – never a dull moment.

Just as we reached our destination in the vicinity of Amiens, I was ordered to another NCO school down near the coast, seemed they never gave up on trying to make a parade ground soldier out of me – they never succeeded. At any rate it kept me out of Amiens-Parvillers. When I got back, both Bob Whyte and Cantin had been sent to Bexhill, England, to the OTS to try and make officers and gentlemen out of them. They were on the way back to the Regiment when the war came to an end and we never did find out if the transformation worked.

After the Amiens-Parvillers scrap, we started north again and met with another disaster at a place called Tilley. We lost all our officers and senior NCOs at this seemingly unimportant spot. It looked easy but it turned out to be deadly. But that is a story all by itself, maybe we will be able to get around to telling it soon.

A few days before Armistice, Jim Plenty and I were given leave to England. We jumped at the chance since nobody wanted to be the last man to be killed with the end so close at hand. I came back to the Battalion and found I had been posted to the Transport as CQMS, a job for which I had no liking but it paid the same as CSM and the war was over so, I accepted. I returned to Canada with the Battalion but managed to stop off at my old home in Alma, P.E.I.. Here I visited my family before returning to Edmonton and railroading.

Following my retirement from the railway, Alice (my wife) and I moved to Los Angeles, California, where we engaged in apartment management for several years. I found Al Cantin listed in the phone book and called him up. We had a joyful reunion and during all the many years we remained in Los Angeles we had regular monthly meetings of the Los Angeles Branch of the 49th Association. You may be sure we gave the whole war a good going over picking out the good and condemning the bad. We sure did enjoy recalling the wonderful companionship of a great bunch of men and our opening toast was always to “those who never came back”.

Now Alice and I are back in Canada, for good it seems. We thought it best to return and have taken up residence in Victoria, B.C., at 258 Gorge Rd, E. Windsor Court #3, V9A 6W5. Our phone is 384-5258. We would enjoy hearing from any of the old boys and promise to answer in return.

So long for now,

Dave Barbour

Youth has the flame but the light shines from the old.

# **DIARY**

Accession Number: 1991.41.1

Private. D.A. Barbour

No. 433070

9th Platoon, C Coy

49th Battalion CEF

Personal Diary of David Athol Barbour

1916

24 Dec. 1915 We are in a rest Billet way behind the firing line, where we cannot hear anything but the big guns once in a while.

It is X-mas eve and the boys are celebrating. They were all out in the evening and the

most of them came home feeling pretty good. When they got in the barn they started to

sing and such a noise. I think they could be heard a mile

away. They kept it up till about midnight before they went to sleep.

25 Dec. 1915 A nice fine morning with no snow or no frost but lots of mud and the first Christmas I ever saw without snow. Was working in the kitchen all day helping to get the X-mas dinner ready. We had roast beef and plum pudding and mashed potatoes. It was a pretty good dinner considering and we also got some presents from Canada.

1 Jan. 1916 A nice fine day. We are still in the same billets. The boys did a little celebrating today as it is New Year’s Day. We expect to go in the trenches pretty soon.

8 Jan. 1916 Moving again this morning, about 8 miles to go. Arrived there about 11 o’clock, relieved the 3rd, went into tents this time. We are in Div. Res.

9 Jan. 1916 Nothing to do but rifle inspection at ten o’clock.

10 Jan. 1916 Nothing to do but take it easy.

11 Jan. 1916 Nothing to do again today. There was a concert at the YMCA in the evening and it was pretty good.

12 Jan. 1916 Went in the trenches for the first time on the evening of January 12 to hold the line as a Battalion. It was a cold windy moonlit night. A few clouds and a little shower of rain coming near morning.

13 Jan. 1916 (Thursday). A nice clear day. Fritz is pretty quiet. One man got killed in 'A' Coy, shot through the head by a sniper. Stand too comes at dusk, then there is lots of rifle fire. It was quiet all night, no rain.

14 Jan. 1916 (Friday). Another clear day. Our Artillery started popping at Fritz about ten o’clock and at last he got sore and started to come back at our front line. He started about half a mile on the right of the trench we were holding. They dropped one shell at a time and every one was about fifteen yards nearer to where we were. He went up and down the trench three times and he never put one in the same place. When he got through shelling us we had four casualties, one was 9th platoon’s officer. It was quiet all night, was on listening post.

15 Jan. 1916 (Saturday). Quiet all day. Fritz put over a few shells, but nobody hurt. Was on sentry all night.

16 Jan. 1916 (Sunday). Another clear day. Fritz was pretty quiet all day. He threw over a few shells but did no damage. Relieved in the evening by the R.C.R.’s. Marched out to a billet about two miles back. Supper was ready when we got there; hot tea and mulligan. When we finished supper, the boys needed no coaxing to go to bed and sleep. The name of our billet was "stink farm". The farms and billets are all named. We are in Brig. reserve.

17 Jan. 1916 (Monday). Fritz started shelling the billet about ten o’clock in the morning and we had to all get out in the field and stay there about two hours. He soon got tired of it and quit. A German aeroplane flew over the billet twice today so we expect something tomorrow.

The following is a piece I saw in a paper out here and it is pretty true.

To a trench – Somewhere in France

There’s mud in the trenches, And water as well,

Shrapnel and bullets – Say! Isn’t it hell!

The mud holds you fast, Whilst the water will ooze

Through the seams of your boots, to your ration of booze

With a shout you get free when a cannon’s dull thud

Will cause you to flop in three feet of mud.

You’re cold and you’re wet, but you mustn’t go sick,

You’ve got to get busy with shovel and pick;

The parapet’s down, so watch out for your bean;

Fritz in the same plight, has cause to feel mean.

The sooner you finish, the sooner you’re through,

So you work like a nigger, get all hit up too.

Then wade to your dugout – to snatch an hour’s rest,

And dream if your home away out in the west.

But when you arrive at your sand-bag abode,

Your heart will cease beating; your blood will corrode;

What you’ve been expecting, at least has occurred.

Your dug-outs collapsed, your curses are heard

But, not a man will pay heed to your cursing

His heart is to full, his own troubles nursing.

So you sit on the firing step, and manage to doze

Though you’re wet to the skin and your feet are half froze;

You dream of a land without unpleasant smells,

Sand-bags or trenches, bullets or shells;

You dream of a maiden you loved long ago –

Perhaps she is flirting with some civvy beau;

You dream of your home and the steaming hot tub,

Of the clothes you once wore and the mother-cooked grub;

You’ve only just dozed when a Sergeant prods you

And politely requests you awake and stand too;

Then you fully realize as you awake in a minute

There’s a war on in Flanders and you’re right in it!

G.E. Beamish

1st Canadians

18 Jan. 1916 (Tuesday). Wet and cold all day. Was sick; went to the doctor; some of “C” Coy went too; for a bath. Did not go on work party tonight; so, I had a good sleep on a straw bed and slept the clock around. Met Fred for the first time since coming to France.

19 Jan. 1916 (Wednesday). A nice fine day; nothing much to do. Fritz did not bother us, so we took it easy all day. Out on a working party in the evening; got back at midnight.

20 Jan. 1916 (Thursday). A fine day. Fritz started shelling the billet again at noon and kept it up all the afternoon. He put over about 75 shells and only one hit the billet. The only casualties were one man killed and “C” Coy cooks badly scared. Tonight, we go in the trenches again but we will be in reserve this time so it will not be so bad. We are in luck this time too; we have a billet to sleep in again. It is an old ruin; some farm buildings that have been shelled to pieces early in the war. It is under a hill where fritz cannot see it, so it is never bothered now, so we had a nice comfortable place to sleep all the time we were in. Was on guard that night from ten to twelve and from four till six in the morning.

21 Jan. 1916 (Friday). Another nice clear day. I have another two hours to do on guard in the afternoon, nothing to do that night so I had a good sleep. There was a work party out, but I was not on it.

22 Jan. 1916 (Saturday). Up at six in the morning to go on work party. The first thing is to get breakfast cooked. We have a pail with a fire in it and there is about fifteen men to cook their breakfast in it. Everyone cooks his own meals. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the early riser, he is nearly always up early, and gets a fire going and while he goes for his grub, the rest of the bunch gets on the fire and when he comes back with his meat, he cannot get near the fire, then there is a row. They chew the rag for a while and finally get finished in time to go on the work party at eight o’clock. Worked till twelve and then fritz got

funny with his shells so we went back to the billet. Nothing to do in the afternoon. Went after rations in the evening and then had another good night's sleep.

23 Jan. 1916 (Sunday). Another fine day. Some more fun to get our breakfast cooked again but finished by eight o’clock, then out on a work till twelve but did not work too hard. Fritz pretty quiet all day. Went after rations in the evening. Had another good night's sleep.

24 Jan. 1916 (Monday). Another nice day. Out on the work party again from eight to twelve and packed up in the afternoon ready to go. Was relieved in the evening by the R.C.R.’s. Had to march five miles to our billets. In Div. reserve, we are out of luck this time for our billets are tents, we were pretty tired when we got there and tumbled into the cold tents about ten o’clock but there was a hot supper waiting for us and it was very few minutes till we were rolled up in our blankets and sound asleep.

25 Jan. 1916 (Tuesday). A rainy day. Nothing to do. I woke up in the morning about nine and someone said reveille had gone and I would not believe him. Nothing to do all day.

26 Jan. 1916 (Wednesday). A nice clear day, rifle inspection at ten o’clock. Nothing to do all day. Fred came to see me in the morning and I walked back with him to his billet at noon.

27 Jan. 1916 (Thursday). Another fine day. Took our blankets to get cleaned in the morning. Had a bath and change of clothes in the afternoon.

28 Jan. 1916 (Friday). Rained all day, nothing to do again. Went to a concert at the YMCA in the evening. It was real good and our C.O. gave us a spiel to finish up with.

29 Jan. 1916 (Saturday). Another fine day, ready to move again. Relieved at eleven o’clock by 2nd Batt. and then did a seven-mile march, back to rest billets at Berthin. As we did it in the day it was not so bad. We have a fine billet, lots of clean straw to sleep on. It is a pretty place with a fine view of all the country around.

30 Jan. 1916 (Sunday). Another nice fine day. We had nothing to do but take it easy. There was a big bombardment on around Kemmel last night and we heard that the 28th and 29th Batt. made a raid on fritz and got into his front lines and killed some. Also brought back three prisoners.

31 Jan. 1916 (Monday). Reported sick this morning. Have a bad cold and a boil on the back of my neck. Was marked no duty so I took it easy.

1 Feb. 1916 (Tuesday). Still sick and not feeling like working. The 49th and the R.C.R. Batt. had a football match in the afternoon at two o'clock and we beat them 8 to 0. It was easy.

2 Feb. 1916 (Wednesday). Still sick. did nothing all day but write a letter.

3 Feb. 1916 (Thursday). Still sick, not feeling like doing much. The 49th and the 42nd Batt. played a football match at two in the afternoon. We beat them 2 to 1. It was a fine game and it kept our boys hustling to do it. Our C.O. was tickled all to pieces.

4 Feb. 1916 (Friday). A rainy day, so we had nothing to do.

5 Feb. 1916 (Saturday). Brigade Sports were held in a field near Brigade Headquarters at two o' clock in the afternoon. It was a fine time, there was some great fun. The 49th won the biggest share of the prizes. Each Batt. had two tug of war teams and the 49th teams beat them all. There was the P.P.C.L.I., the R.C.R.’s and the 42nd. They are in our Brigade.

We won the sack race, we won the wrestling on horseback, our team of heavy horses took first and our C.O. saddle horse took second. When the general gave us a spiel at the finish he wanted to know if there was only two Battalions in his Brigade as there was only the P.P.’s and the 49th that won prizes.

6 Feb. 1916 (Sunday). Church parade in the morning and a football match in the afternoon between the RFA and the 49th and we beat them 3 to 0. Received a parcel from Ray with a pair of socks and mitts and some cake.

7 Feb. 1916 (Monday). A cold damp day, an occasional shower of rain. Getting ready to move again tomorrow.

8 Feb. 1916 (Tuesday). Up at five thirty in the morning to get packed up. Had breakfast and started at daybreak, eight miles to go. Arrived about 11:30 went into huts this time. We have our new officer in Nine Platoon, he is a nephew of our C.O. He seems like a pretty nice fellow. The boys all like him.

9 Feb. 1916 (Wednesday). A fine day. We are in Brigade reserve. There was no work party today, so we had nothing to do. I started to go to see Fred but turned back as we are not supposed to leave the billet, we are in reserve.

10 Feb. 1916 (Thursday). Another fine day. Reveille at five thirty, went on working party at 7:30, did not go far this time, building a strong point at Kemmel, filling sandbags and building trenches in the houses. Came home at one o’clock. Received a letter from Ray and one from Sophie.

We drew lots to see who went on pass first, I drew 49. I think it is a lucky number, so there is 48 to go to England before me.

We had just finished with the pass business and was going out to get supper when bang, bang, two of fritz's shells hit right in front of the hut, then there was a scramble, and everyone scattered out through the fields. It was only a few seconds till we heard them coming again. They hit the hill just on the right of the shack about 20 yds. away. By that time, we had got to a pretty safe distance in the other direction. Then we heard them coming again and we ducked, but they fell short and hit up on the hill. The next ten went over and hit about a half mile behind us. One hit a transport wagon but did not hurt the driver or the horses but the horses ran away. Then they planted three about fifty yds. from the billet, then gave it up as a bad job.

11 Feb. 1916 (Friday). Up at five thirty. A cold and rainy morning. Out on a working party at eight, worked till eleven and came home. Got paid as soon as we got home, then got ready to go in the trenches. Marched away from the huts at three o'clock. Was in the front line at five. It is still raining with a raw wind blowing, but the trenches are in fine shape. The best we have been in yet. The first job I got was out on the listening post. Had to climb through two rows of barbed wire out on no man’s land and then lay down in the mud for two hours and watch that fritz does not pull off some funny stunt. Then we were relieved for four hours and then we did two more. It never stopped raining all night. There is a big bombardment going on down near Ypres and I have just been told that fritz is making an attack.

12 Feb. 1916 (Saturday). It is a nice fine morning. The rain has stopped, and we are in hopes that the sun will come out. The bombardment over on our left has stopped this morning and our officer has told us that our boys have lost some trenches. It was quiet till about two o'clock in the afternoon and then our artillery opened up on fritz. It kept up till stand-to in the evening and then it stopped as suddenly as it started.

About midnight we got the news that our boys had made a successful counterattack on the trenches that had been lost, with the help of our artillery and taken them all back and captured a bunch of prisoners. Was on sentry all night, two on and four off. It started to rain at midnight and kept up till morning.

13 Feb. 1916 (Sunday). Fine this morning. The rain has stopped, and we are in hopes of getting some of our clothes dry today. Also, to get some much-needed sleep. Fritz is pretty good here; he has been pretty quiet. There was a big fleet of aeroplanes up this evening, about half were ours, the other half were fritz’s.

I went for rations in the evening after stand to.

I am not on guard tonight so I think I will have one good sleep.

14 Feb. 1916 (Monday). Nothing happened all night and I had a good sleep. It Is a fine morning and looks as if it will be fine all day.

Our artillery started up about noon to shell fritz's front line and about ten shells fell short right into our own front line, but we were lucky no-one was hurt. I hear one man was hit today in D Coy, shot in shoulder. At stand-to fritz made another attack about two miles on our left and we hear he got into our front line again. The artillery was going on both sides all night. I was on sentry all night, four on and two off. Started to rain again about midnight, then about three it started to snow, big and heavy wet flakes of snow. It snowed about as thick as I ever saw it snow before. We were cold, wet, hungry and sleepy. It was about the most miserable three hours I ever put in in my life.

15 Feb. 1916 (Tuesday). Stand-to came about five thirty and everyone was out ready for business if need be and at the same time our artillery let loose all at once, all the big ones. I never heard such a noise before, and it was all on the trench that fritz got into last evening. The Battery that Fred is in, I could see them firing; their shells were going right above our heads and landing behind fritz's front line a little on our left. It kept up till six thirty and stopped again as sudden as it started. We heard later that we got all the trenches back and got some more prisoners. Everything was quiet for the rest of the day. We were relieved in the evening by the \_\_\_. About 7 miles back to the billets, with full pack on. It started to rain when we left the front and it just poured down all the way home. We went into huts at \_\_\_ wet to the skin and no fire in the hut, but there was a bit of hot supper ready for us. We had that and tumbled into bed in our wet clothes and went to sleep.

16 Feb. 1916 (Wednesday). A fine morning. Had a pretty good sleep, considering. We stole some coal in the morning and made a fire and got our clothes dry. Went for a bath in the afternoon. Was put on guard in the billet in the evening, did two on and four off all night. There was about a seventy mile an hour wind blowing all night. 9th Platoon’s officer that was wounded came back today, Lieut. Gregory.

17 Feb. 1916 (Thursday). A nice fine day. Nothing to do till evening. Got a letter from Ray in the afternoon. A working party at four in the afternoon. Walked about seven miles to do two hours work but was through with the job about ten o'clock and reached home about one in the morning. We had a lovely night for it. It was a moonlit night almost clear as day.

18 Feb. 1916 (Friday). Slept till ten o'clock this morning. It has been raining all the forenoon. We have nothing to do today. It rained all day. There was three German Aeroplanes flew over \_\_\_\_\_ and dropped about ten or twelve bombs. I have not heard what damage they did. It was still raining hard in the evening so I did not go out. Stayed in the hut and played cards until nine o'clock and then went to bed.

19 Feb. 1916 (Saturday). Another wet damp day. We go in the trenches again tonight so now we are packing up ready to start at three o'clock. About 7 miles to go. We will be in reserve this time.

It stopped raining in the afternoon and turned out to be a lovely evening. Arrived in the trenches all safe. I am in a strong point this time. Will be on guard duty doing two hours on sentry and ten off all the time. We are in the trenches; our bed is in a dugout six by six and three feet high and there is four of us in it.

20 Feb. 1916 (Sunday). A nice fine day. On sentry from eight to ten in the morning. Nothing to do all day but cook our meals and sleep. Fritz is fairly quiet here on this part of the line. He puts over a few shells now and then. He put a few over in the afternoon a little to our left. I think he was looking for some of our Battery’s but he is out of luck. A lot of them went out in the middle of a field and tore up a bit of mud. One hit a tree about ten inches through and cut it clean off about eight feet from the ground and the rest of them tore up some nice hedges. When he got through, we went over with a shovel and dug up some of the nose caps for souvenirs. Was on sentry again from eight to ten in the evening and then went to bed. The wind has been in our favor for some time, but it is working around a little towards fritz this evening.

Fritz sent about fifteen Aeroplanes over in the morning. They started out to make a raid.

21 Feb. 1916 (Monday). There was a white frost last night, but it is a glorious morning, just like a fall morning on the prairie. It is such a change from the damp, chilly weather we have had for the last three months, the damp, wet weather is worse than the frost. Was up at five this morning to go on sentry, was on till seven. The wind has worked around right to where fritz wants it. Every time he gets the wind, he sends us some gas on some part of the line, so we are always ready for him. Was on sentry again in the evening from eight to ten, then went to bed.

22 Feb. 1916 Up at five to go on sentry. On till eight. It is another glorious morning. There was another white frost and it froze pretty hard this morning. We heard that fritz made a gas attack somewhere down on our left, but there was none of it here. It started to snow about noon, wet, damp stuff. There was about three or four inches fell and then it turned cold and froze it so this evening everything is white and the first time this winter that it has stayed more than two hours. A big bombardment going on somewhere on our left. The earth is one steady tremble. Was on sentry from eight to ten and then went to bed.

Received a parcel from Ray, a pair of socks, some fudge and some cookies.

23 Feb. 1916 (Wednesday). Up at six to go on sentry till eight. Another frosty night, the coldest yet but we don’t mind that as it is dry. The snow is still here, and the wind has come back in our favor again. Nothing to do all day but pack up and get ready to get out some time this evening. It turned cold again when the sun went down. The snow that fell all stayed this time and an hour after sundown this evening it would almost make you think you were in Alaska. The ground white with snow and the thermometer is down almost to zero. I have heard some people say there was no winter in this country, but we have all the winter here right now that I want.

We marched out in the dark and the road was nothing but ice. We had some fun before we got home with that pack on our back but we got there at last to find a hot supper waiting for us, which we were not long in putting out of sight and in getting to bed and to sleep with nothing to worry or disturb us tonight.

24 Feb. 1916 (Thursday). A nice fine morning. Woke up about seven in the morning and I thought I was back again in northern Alberta. The windows of the hut were all frosted up and when I went outside, I thought it was almost below zero. Everything was white with snow and creaking with the frost and I went out and had a wash in the creek. It was about the coldest bath I ever took. I went to the dentist to have a tooth filled at ten. Had to wait till about three in the afternoon before he could do anything to it. Then he drilled it out and put something in to kill the nerve and I am to go back in four days. I went in to see Fred on my way home. He is looking fine. He has been to England on leave and got back a few days ago. Had a letter from Sophie today with a note in it from Ray also, and two pictures. Nothing to do tonight but go to bed.

25 Feb. 1916 (Friday). Up in the morning at six to go on a work party. The ground is white with snow and I am sure it is down to zero, it feels pretty cold. We were working at an old communication trench fixing it up. Worked until 12 o'clock. Caught a pheasant on the way home and had him for supper. It started to snow again just after supper, and we had a regular eastern Canada snowstorm.

Received two letters from Ray about eight o'clock so I answered them before I went to bed.

We received the report tonight that Fritz has made an attack on the French lines away down on our right and that he broke the line, but I hope it is not true.

26 Feb. 1916 (Saturday). It is a fine nice morning but have got some snow. A week ago, I thought we were going to get through the winter without any snow, but we got enough this time to make up for what we missed the first part of the winter. Went on a work party again this morning but it is a lot warmer. Was on the same job we were on yesterday. Worked till noon and then came home. It has started to thaw so the snow is disappearing.

“C” Coy cooks gave us a surprise for supper. Some of the best beefsteak and mashed potatoes and gravy that I have seen them make since I have been in the 49th Batt. and it sure was good.

27 Feb. 1916 (Sunday). Snowing again this morning. Up at six to go on work party. Was on the same job again today. Fritz was throwing shells over us all the time we were working and when we went home, he was shelling the road that we had to go along and I had about the closest shave I have had yet, but we all got away safe. He was shelling near our billet again in the afternoon. It has turned warm again and is thawing tonight.

28 Feb. 1916 (Monday). A nice fine morning with just enough frost to keep the ground hard. Was up at six, had breakfast at six thirty, then started for the dentist at eight. About three miles to walk. Had a tooth filled and was back home at the huts at eleven. Then packed up ready to go in the trenches again. It started to rain again about two, so we arrived in the trenches nice and wet. In the front line this time. Was on sentry all the night, four hours on and two off. It rained nearly all night.

29 Feb. 1916 (Tuesday). A nice fine morning. The rain has stopped, and it looks like a fine day. Nothing to do all day but cook my meals and sleep. Slept till four o’clock then went on sentry. Did four on and two off till morning. It rained a little between 12 and 3. Everything was quiet all night.

1 Mar. 1916 (Wednesday). A nice fine morning. Nothing to do all day but sleep. There was a little fun started about four o'clock. We started to throw trench mortars over at fritz and they made some beautiful shots. They dropped straight into his trenches. There was sandbags, clothes and dugouts fifty feet in the air. He started throwing aerial torpedoes back at us. He threw two but that was all. Our artillery was waiting for him to do that. They let go altogether right at the spot where he threw them from. That was enough, he did not try to throw any more. Our boys gave him hell for nearly an hour and there was never a squeak from him all the time. Once they stuck a white flag up on the parapet but the only answer, he got was a trench mortar right on top of it.

I went out for rations at six. Went about half a mile, was back at seven thirty. Went on

sentry from 8 to 12 and from 2 to 6. A bombardment started about three thirty, away

over somewhere on our left. We could see the guns flashing and could feel the earth

tremble. At four o'clock hell broke loose again along the whole front as far as could be

seen, each side of us, and what a row they did kick up. I think fritz received the surprise

of his life, he thought we were coming for sure. He had flare lights going until it was as

bright as day. I never heard such a noise. We could not hear each other speak. They kept

it up till daybreak and then stopped all at once. I was standing on the firing step looking

over the parapet and one of our trench mortars exploded in fritz's front line. A piece

came back right into our own, it missed my face by about 8 inches.

2 Mar. 1916 (Thursday). A nice fine morning. I am off duty all day. I cooked some breakfast and

went to bed, slept nearly all day. Got up at four and cooked supper. Went on Sentry

from six to eight. There was part of a new Batt. in with us tonight to get broke in. They

are the Batt. They have been in France only a few days. If they had been here last night

when the bombardment was on, they would have been well broke in. But it was pretty

quiet all night. They are still raising hell away down on the left. Received a letter from

Ray last evening saying that Uncle Tom was dead.

3 Mar. 1916 (Friday). A nice fine morning. Cooked breakfast and went to bed. Slept till four, got up and had some supper, then packed up ready to be relieved and as usual when we start to move it starts to rain and it rained all the way out to the billets. We got shelled on the road home and about six men hit. There was a fire in the hut when we got home and a hot supper waiting for us. We soon got on the outside of the supper and tumbled into bed wet to the skin and in bed is the only place to get dry. Had a good sleep, the clothes were dry by morning.

4 Mar. 1916 (Saturday). Snowing this morning. I got orders to pack up again at 2 to go to the bomb school. They are not satisfied out here if they have not got someone moving or marching carrying that pack. We got to the bomb school about 3 o'clock. Nothing to do in the evening.

5 Mar. 1916 (Sunday). A fine morning. Up at seven, listened to a lecture from 10 to 12. Went for a bath in the afternoon. Nothing to do in the evening. Went to bed at nine and sleep all night.

6 Mar. 1916 (Monday). Fine in the morning but it was snowing by spells all day. Was practicing bomb throwing in the forenoon, listened to a lecture in the afternoon. Went to soccer and got paid in the evening. Had another good sleep.

7 Mar. 1916 (Tuesday). Snowing still this morning. Still on the bomb throwing and lectures. Snowing so hard in the evening that I did not go out so I think it will be another good night for sleep. Fritz got careless about the way he threw his big shells around, today just about noon there was two or three came pretty close to the hut but did not hurt no one.

8 Mar. 1916 (Wednesday). It is a fine morning. The sun is shining and there is about 8 inches of snow. We are getting ready to move again this afternoon, going back for a rest. We don't know just where, but I think it is about seven miles. Left the huts about one thirty, had two short rests on the road. Arrived at our new billet about three thirty. It is a farm this time and not a very good one at that. We are sleeping in the barn and it is so full of holes that you could throw a cat through it. We are still learning and practicing bomb throwing, learning all we can about our own bombs, also Fritz’s. The people at this farm are a little more friendly than some we have stayed with, so we went in the house and bought some supper. The Mrs. of the house has three brothers and her husband away fighting and her other brother, about 16 years old, is running the farm. I went to bed about 9 o’clock and it was the most uncomfortable bed and the poorest sleep I have had since I have been in this country, and I have slept in some queer places. I will see that I have a better one tomorrow night if I have to pinch something to have it.

9 Mar. 1916 (Thursday). A nice fine morning but oh it is cold in this old barn. I will be tickled when we get back with “C” Coy again. We were on parade from 10 to twelve, still on the bomb throwing. In the afternoon we had a lecture from 2 till 4, then in the evening we walked over to the Coy billet for some supper and to see if there was any mail, but there was none. Came back to our own billet about 8 o’clock, went out and pinched some straw for to fix up a bed and we did fix up a good one, had a fine sleep.

10 Mar. 1916 (Friday). Snowing this morning and it makes everyone feel miserable. Went for a walk after breakfast, then threw some more bombs till noon. Then we packed up to go back to the Coy and darn glad we were to go. It was about three quarters of a mile to go, got there just in time for supper. Nothing to do but go to bed.

11 Mar. 1916 (Saturday). A nice fine morning. Rifle inspection at nine o'clock. Nothing else to do before dinner. In the afternoon we went for a route march, started at two o'clock. They took us to a trench mortar school for to see a trench mortar working and it was some walk too, over there and then back. Arrived home about six o’clock in the evening. There was some mulligan and tea for supper. Was expecting some Canadian mail tonight but it did not come. The first time since I left Canada that there has been none came for more than a week.

12 Mar. 1916 (Sunday). Another fine morning. The sun is trying to come out again for a change. Rifle inspection at ten, church parade in the afternoon at three o’clock. There was a football match at two thirty between the 49th Batt. and the 72nd RFA and the 49th beat them three to two. It was a pretty fair game, but field was awful muddy.

Going on a trench mortar course in the morning at 7 o’clock.

13 Mar. 1916 (Monday). A nice fine morning. Up at 6 to go to the trench mortar school. Arrived there at 9 o’clock. We had a lecture first, then we practiced setting up the guns for a while, then we had another lecture, then we went to dinner. We did the same in the afternoon. Arrived back at the billet about 4.

It has been about the first real hot sunny day we have seen since last summer and it was a real summers day. The sun was shining all day and we are now in hopes that the mud will soon disappear. The snow has all gone again, so now it looks a little more like summer.

14 Mar. 1916 (Tuesday). A nice fine morning again. I went to the grenade school again at nine thirty. I belong to the Trench Mortar Battery from now on.

The sun was very hot all day, just like summer. The Aeroplanes were very busy all day. I saw two falls, but I don't know who they belonged to, they were too far away for us to see. It is an exciting thing to watch, a fight between two planes. When they get close enough you can hear the machine guns barking at one another. Sometimes one gets the other and sometimes they don't. The Batt. went to a concert today but I was not with them. They said it was pretty good.

15 Mar. 1916 (Wednesday). Another glorious morning and it looks like another hot day. Well, the hot days are welcome just now for they are making the mud disappear awful fast.

Still at the trench mortar school learning all we can about them.

It is one year ago today that I enlisted.

We are sill looking for our Canadian mail, but I expect it will be here in a day or two.

16 Mar. 1916 (Thursday). Another fine summer day. The sun is awful hot. Was at the grenade school

till noon.

We had a football game in the afternoon between the P.P.C.L.I. and the 49th for the

championship of the Brigade and we beat them three to two. It was a pretty good game.

At the start of the game the P.P.’s scored two goals and they thought they had a cinch

but the last half of the game it turned the other way and our fellows had it on them

every way they turned. Our C.O. watched the whole game. He was tickled all to pieces.

17 Mar. 1916 (Friday). Another fine day. Went to the grenade school again in the morning. We were

near the bathhouse so at noon I went down to where it is and managed to get in and

had a fine bath and a change of clothes.

Some of the boys got paid today so “C” is expecting theirs tomorrow.

Our Canadian mail arrived today but there is some missing yet.

18 Mar. 1916 (Saturday). Again, it is a lovely summer's day. Was at the grenade school till noon. At

noon we went to the bath again. Had a dandy shower. Then walked home. When we

got home, we got our pay. The Batt. was inspected by the General. We are moving again

in the morning and I think we are going to have a change from now on. I hear we are

going into the hottest trenches on this front, bar none, where we will likely have to do a

bit of scrapping.

Received two letters from home today.

“C” Coy received some socks today sent by the P.E.I. Red Cross Society.

19 Mar. 1916 (Sunday). Another dandy day and I think that summer has really started. The mud has

almost entirely disappeared. It is Sunday morning and just like a May morning in

Canada. If we did not see an occasional Aeroplane and the guns shooting at it, we would hardly know there was a war on. But we are moving today, just the trench mortar Battery, and I belong to it now. The Batt. is coming tomorrow, so pretty soon we will be into something pretty hot. I did not have to walk this move. There was motor lorries to move the Battery, so we rode on them. We are in huts this time. Ypres this time.

20 Mar. 1916 (Monday). A fine sunny morning. Nothing much to do only a little drill on the trench

mortars. Walked to town in the evening. Received a parcel from Ray today. It has started to rain this evening.

21 Mar. 1916 (Tuesday). A wet morning. It kept drizzling rain by spells all day, so we did not do much.

I went to town in the evening and saw my platoon march away on the way to the trenches and it is the first time since I enlisted that they have marched out of billets in full marching order that I was not with them. But I expect to go in a day or two. I now

belong to the Div. Trench Mortar Battery.

22 Mar. 1916 (Wednesday). Wet again this morning. It rained all day, so we had nothing to do. Part of the Battery went into the trenches.

23 Mar. 1916 (Thursday). Still raining this morning but it stopped at noon. We started for the trenches at four. We rode on the transport wagon and it was some rough ride. The wagon took us as far as it could, and a guide was supposed to meet us there, but did not, so we did not like the idea of going to the front line at night when the guide did not come. We went and found a guard room and made ourselves comfortable for the night.

24 Mar. 1916 (Friday). A nice fine morning. We started into the front line about seven and found our Battery about eleven o'clock. It is some place we are in this time. It is the point of Y\_\_\_\_, right out on the farthest advanced point where Fritz can hit us in the back with his Artillery just as easy as he can hit us in the face, and where he snipes with field guns. It is a pretty hot spot by spells. We have a pretty good dugout this time if fritz will leave it alone, though nearly all the dugouts I see around here have been blown in. The 49th are in here holding the line where our Battery is. They have had a few casualties already, but I don't know who they were. We are in Sanctuary Woods.

25 Mar. 1916 (Saturday). Slept till ten this morning. Got up had some breakfast and then cleaned up the dugout. Our dugout is in the supports and there is a brook halfway up to the front line. I was up there cleaning my mess tin and our artillery had been giving fritz a little to think about and finally he got sore and what a shelling we did get. He shelled the front line and the communication trench and the supports and there was two P.P.C.L.I.’s got hit right by our dugout. One had his arm broke; the other only lived a few minutes. When it was all over the 49th had 35 casualties and I heard since that the 42nd lost 77 men. One I saw carried out was Neil Campbell of 9 platoon and I hear that Skitch and Stephenson got scratched though not very bad. Capt. Ball, our Chaplain and Lieut. Allison were among the casualties of the 49th. One shell hit headquarters and our C.O. and Adj. had a narrow escape.

We started to go for rations about dark. We took a notion to go a little early for some reason and we had only gone about five hundred yards when fritz put a shell into our dugout. When we got back the whole end was knocked in, but it takes a lot of shells to drive a man away from his home out here. So we went to work and sandbagged it up again and we still living in it.

26 Mar. 1916 (Sunday). A nice fine morning. It was pretty quiet all night. We were expecting something to start at noon, so we took good care to be quite always from our dugout when it did start. Sure, enough it did. Fritz dropped about ten the first crack and within fifty yards of our dugout and at the same time he started on the C.M.R. They are just a little on our left and on the side of a hill and what a shelling they did get. The shells were dropping like hail, the whole hill looked like as if it was moving and there was only one man hit. I think it was a miracle for I don't know how else they escaped. There was two RFA men hit in the communication trench just behind our dugout. One of them died and the other they did not know if he would live or not. At four o'clock we were woke by another bombardment on our right, about Hill 60, and I heard that our boys were going to take some trenches.

27 Mar. 1916 (Monday). The bombardment kept up till long after daylight and we heard since that our boys have taken some of fritz's trenches at St. Eloi and that they took a lot of prisoners.

We also heard that Capt. Ball, our Chaplain, that was wounded, lost his arm and was recommended for the DSO and that Lieut. Allison is dead.

I went for rations in the evening and then went to bed as soon as we got back.

28 Mar. 1916 (Tuesday). A fine sunny day with nothing to do but throw bombs at fritz. Relieved in the

evening, walked out to Z\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and had a ride on the transport from there home and it was some ride. We were nearly shook to pieces. It was nearly midnight when we got to the huts. We had a bite to eat and a drink of tea and tumbled into bed for the first good sleep in four days. Nothing to worry us for we are away back in reserve.

29 Mar. 1916 (Wednesday). I had a fine sleep. The boys had a job to wake me up at ten o'clock in the morning but had to get up and pack my kit ready to move again. We are moving our billets up nearer to the front line, and we are moving into tents this time for a change and at that I think it will be warmer than the hut we are in just now. I made a mattress out of sandbags and filled it with straw, also a blanket out of sandbags, so if this is our billet for the summer, I think I will be fairly comfortable when we are out of the trenches. It is nearly ten from the front line.

30 Mar. 1916 (Thursday). A lovely day. We made two trips back to the huts with the team for to move some stuff that was left yesterday. In the evening I went to a moving picture show. It is one the Government is running for the soldiers at this camp. It is the first thing I Have seen since I left Eng. that looked like civilization.

31 Mar. 1916 (Friday). Up at five o’clock. Went away with the team to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for rations for the Battery. Got back just about noon.

Went down to the Batt. and got same mail in the afternoon. There was a parcel, two bundles of papers and two letters from Ray.

1 Apr. 1916 (Saturday). A hot summer day. There was a bombardment going on again last night. Nothing to do today but get ready to go in the trenches again tonight. We rode in on the transport part of the way and walked the rest. Got there about eleven and had to work till about two o’clock. It was quiet all night.

2 Apr. 1916 (Sunday). A lovely morning. We have not much to do this morning. It was very quiet all day, but it was awful hot. Went to bed at about nine and had a good sleep.

3 Apr. 1916 (Monday). Another fine day. Up at six to cook our breakfast and about noon we threw twenty-two trench mortars at Fritz, sixty-pound ones, and they sure made the dirt fly. Fritz got sore and sent some big shells back, but I don’t think he hurt anyone.

4 Apr. 1916 (Tuesday). Another lovely day, we did not have much to do. We carried a few bombs and fixed up an emp\_\_\_\_\_, Fritz did quite a bit of shelling but the most of it was away back behind the line, but he put a few in the front line too. I think he is much tamer here, than he was when the Canadians took over this part of the line at first.

I received a bundle of papers from home last night. There was a little news in them.

5 Apr. 1916 (Wednesday). A fine morning with the sun shining awful hot and promises to be a very hot day. The Aeroplanes were busy early this morning. They were up at daybreak and there is two of Fritz’s up above us right now and flying very low, and the men along the front line keep shooting at him but he still sticks around, so we are expecting his Artillery to get busy today. He is putting some into the C.M.R.’s over a little on our left already. I go out tonight sometime, so I hope he won’t get too funny before that time. We were carrying trench mortars up from L?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ corner in the afternoon, we were coming up the communication trench. There was one of our aeroplanes over our head, Fritz started to shell it and there was shrapnel falling all around us. We were expecting to get it on the top of the bean every minute. We had supper in the dugout.

Then we walked out to L?\_\_\_\_\_ corner again, we waited there till the transport wagon came with the rations and we rode home on it. Fritz’s shells the main road nearly every night with shrapnel, at points where he thinks there is transports moving, but he very seldom get any. He threw a few near us on our way home and the drivers got a bit of a scare and the way we did come over that rough road was not very slow. Got home about eleven, went right to bed, expecting to have a nice quiet sleep till morning but we did not have it. Our artillery started a bombardment about three-thirty in the morning and I think Fritz must have been looking for our Batteries for he was dropping shells pretty close to our camp. It woke us up but as they did not seem to come any nearer, we went to sleep again.

6 Apr. 1916 (Thursday). A cloudy morning and a little colder that it has been for some time. The bombardment is still going on. I think it is at St. Eloi again where out boys took those trenches a few nights ago, and it sounds to me as if Fritz has made an attack and taken some of them back, and our artillery is trying to blow him out of them again. They kept it up all day, in the evening Fritz shelled the camp, there were transports going up the road by the camp when he started to throw shrapnel. The horses got scared and some of them ran away. There was quite a mix up. Some of the shells land in some artillery horse lines and killed some horses, and the rest of them broke loose. There was horses running all over the country. There was an awful pile of shells landed around the camp. They were coming up from the right, from the left and from the front.

Went to a picture show at six over where the first Can. Div. are. It was pretty good. Met some of the seventh Batt. that we were with when we were in the trenches at Bleaustrete. Got back to the tents at 8 o’clock and went to bed.

7 Apr. 1916 (Friday). It was raining when we awoke in the morning, but it stopped about nine o’clock.

The bombardment stopped sometime in the night when we were asleep and we have not heard any news yet about what happened, but we have heard that the 27th and the 29th Canadians are in it.

The 49th are in the trenches at Hooge and they lost some men going in the communication trench, with shrapnel. There is no front line where they are, only mine craters and shell holes. There was six men out on one post holding a crater and Fritz dug a sap, underground to it and came up through. They caught our boys by surprise, for they were told that it was quite safe in the daytime. Anyway, they caught them off their guard and the German officer had them covered before they ever knew they were there. Two of the boys rushed the officer but one was shot dead and the other got away, but he got wounded and I heard since that Germans shot the others.

8 Apr. 1916 (Saturday). A nice sunny morning with nothing to do. I heard a little more about what happened in the crater. The two that rushed the German officers, one was shot dead and the other one got hold of the officer before he could shoot again, then they had a bit of a rough and tumble, but the officer shot him twice through the stomach before he could get hold of the revolver. In the meantime, the rest of the boys got hold of their rifles. They are all dead now, but the one that rushed the officer and Fritz found out, to his sorrow that Canadians can still scrap, when some of the boys from the main trench went out a little later, they found them. They were all dead but one, but there as nearly two dead Germans for every one of ours. Also, the officer, Major Hobbins, has his revolver. “C” Coy has had about 20 casualties alone this trip.

There was three men of “D” Coy out on an advanced listening post and they were attacked by a party of Germans, when some of the other boys went out to look for them, they found two of them dead and the other one is missing, but there was seven dead Germans laying beside them. They died, but Fritz paid for it.

The 27th we heard was almost wiped out by shell fire and the 31st lost an awful lot but we have not heard yet how many.

9 Apr. 1916 (Sunday). A fine day bit was none too warm. Nothing much to do all day but get ready to go in the trenches. We rode up on the transport wagon, going through Y\_\_\_\_\_\_. Fritz threw some shells near us, into an old ruin and it made some bricks fly around us but did not hurt anyone, and going by Shell Fire Corner, there was a shrapnel exploded over our head, it scared us a little for a second, but it missed us all, for a wonder.

Arrived at the dugout about ten. Made one trip from the magazine to one of the guns with bombs before we went to bed. Fritz did not let us sleep very peacefully, for he kept putting over an eight-inch shell about every half hour all night on the communication trench, not far from our own dugout, but I don’t believe he got anyone. It is six months today since we landed in France and there is quite few of the old bunch that left Edmonton with us, that have gone under or gone to Blighty, or have gone sick.

10 Apr. 1916 (Monday). A lovely morning. Was up early. Had a few more bombs to carry before breakfast, not much to do all day. A few bombs to clean. Fritz threw a few big shells into the woods where we are and some on the front line, but our artillery gave him two back for every one that he threw at us. One of our Aeroplanes was shot down today just behind us, a shell hit it and broke it in two, it fell straight down. It was quiet all night. Fritz did not bother us at all.

11 Apr. 1916 (Tuesday). Raining this morning so everything is pretty quiet, and as it rained pretty hard all day, we did not do much but cook our meals. At about four o’clock in the afternoon, a big bombardment started on our left down where the guards are, it was fierce, it lasted about two hours and a half. Fritz made an attack, but it did not come off. Our artillery caught him. It was quiet all night.

12 Apr. 1916 (Wednesday). It was fine in the morning, but it did not last long. It started to rain again about ten and Fritz kept pretty quiet. He did not bother us too much on our part of the line, but there was a big bombardment on both sides of us, about noon. There was a mine went up, somewhere a little on our right near Hill 60. It felt like an earthquake. The dugout rocked almost like a boat in the water. I don’t know whose mine it was. It may have been Fritz’s. The 49th goes out tonight. They have had a pretty rough trip this time in, but I have not heard how many they lost. Fritz shelled the communication trench that they go out through with shrapnel, just about dark. I could see the shells burst from where I was. It was a sight. One would hit the trench, the next would burst in the air. He kept that up for a while and then he put some over near us but did not do any damage. Went to bed at ten and had a good sleep. Fritz did not bother us.

13 Apr. 1916 (Thursday). A nice fine morning. The artillery is pretty quiet, only a few shells occasionally.

We were working on gun emplacement all day. Fritz kept pitting a few over our heads all day, but none stopped with us.

Had supper at five, then got ready to go out and we are bit sorry. Walked out to \_\_\_\_\_\_ at seven and rode home on the transport. Further down the road where the 49th are, the last one hit under the corner of the hut that the bomb throwers were in and killed two men and wounded three. As soon as Fritz got through, we went back and went to bed.

14 Apr. 1916 (Friday). Woke up about ten. A nice fine day. The excitement seems to have quieted down some. After breakfast, I went over to the Batt. to see the boys and to hear all the news they had. I found some of them were away on pass to Eng. and some of them had got hilled, some wounded, so now there is only a few of the bunch left. There is only two of the old ones left in my section. Carberry got shot through the face, just below the eyes, the bullet went in one cheek and out the other. Cpl. Parsons was shot in the shoulder, but it was not very bad. Libbie is now in the machine gun section. Passay is on the police, Sheldon has gone to the hospital. Latimer is on the railroad construction gang. Patrick is on the police. Bob White is away on pass to Eng. now. We got orders today that all leave is stopped again, and that all men on leave now were to be back by the 18th so it looks as if there might be something coming off soon.

We filled sandbags for two hours in the afternoon. In the evening we went to the moving pictures, they were pretty good. Came back to the tent and went to bed about nine-thirty. The Batt. had about forty-eight casualties all together last trip, in eight days.

15 Apr. 1916 (Saturday). A nice fine morning but a little cold, nothing much to do today. Rifle inspection at nine. Received a letter from Ray in the afternoon. Was on guard on the camp in the evening, went on at six o’clock, did two hours on and four off all night, and we have a P.P.C.L.I. Private in charge of us, acting Cpl. He enlisted about the middle of July and came out here with a draft and has been out here about a month. When he went into the P.P.’s they would not have him as a Cpl., they made him go in the ranks where he should be. They put him on this job as a Private, so tonight there was no C.O. for to go on guard. They put him on it and he thinks he is a little tin God or something like that.

There was an Aeroplane came over about three o’clock and dropped three bombs quite near the camp. It was a lovely moon lit night, a lovely night for aeroplanes to be out, to do their dirty work, but they did not hurt any one this time.

16 Apr. 1916 (Sunday). A nice warm summer’s day with a hot sun for a change and everything seems to be very quiet, we can not hear a sound from the artillery.

We got paid again today.

Today is also my birthday. I am twenty-three years old today. Went to a church service, in the Y.M. in the evening. Came home and went to bed about nine-thirty. It started to rain just after we went to bed, and it rained all night.

17 Apr. 1916 (Monday). Still raining this morning, but we had a rifle inspection at nine o’clock just the same, the rain made no difference. Oh, we have some bright N.C.O. and officers on this job. We go in the trenches again this evening.

Three of they boys were not ready for the inspection this morning and were reported absent from parade. They were up before the C.O. and got a calling down. I was up to the Batt. this afternoon to see the boys, they are camped only a little way from here. They are not in the trenches now.

It is still raining, and I think we are going to get wet tonight.

Left the camp for the trenches about seven o’clock, had a good trip going in. We got a little wet but that did not hurt much. Fritz threw a few shrapnel over the road near us but did not hurt anyone.

There is one man on this job that when I came to get acquainted with him, I found out that he came from P.E.I. His name is Crosiers from Kensington. He was up to Mr. Clark’s the winter after Mr. Clark came to Alma and was storm stayed for a month. Dad will remember about him for he saw him and the fellow that was with him go by our house one afternoon, just after a bug snowstorm. They had walked from Nelson Ramsay’s. I never met him when he was up that time, but I remembered about him and knew his name. I never heard of him since that time till I met him here in Belgium. He enlisted in the \_\_\_\_\_ in Calgary and came out here with a draft about the first of the year and was put in “B” Coy of the 49th Batt. and now he is on this trench mortar job with me. And if some of the P.P.C.L.I. N.C.O.’s that are in charge of us do not change their ways pretty quick, we are going to ask to go back to the 49th Batt. where we have white men for N.C.O.’s and Officers, instead of the dog headed, half witted college student, that are in charge of us now.

18 Apr. 1916 (Tuesday). Still raining by spells this morning. It was pretty quiet all night. We had nothing to bother us all night except the rats and they are thick enough to almost carry us away and you can not scare them. At night they will get in the dugout and get a piece of cheese or meat and they will fight over it like two dogs and as long as you don’t light a light, you can not kick them out of the dugout.

In the afternoon we threw two sixty pounders over at Fritz’s front line, our artillery gave him hell all along the line. It was comical to see the big ones hit in his front line. Wherever we looked there was sandbags and trench floors fifty feet in the air. It is still raining and rained all night. Wrote a letter to Hamill(?) last night.

19 Apr. 1916 (Wednesday). Still raining this morning and we have got to go and build a bomb magazine. Worked at it till twelve o’clock and then came home to dinner. We were working away about ten, when bang, Fritz dropped a big shell about fifty yards from us, right in among a work party of about fifty men, but by a miracle it never hit anyone and as soon as they got on their feet, they beat it and none too soon, for they could hear another one coming, but when it hit there was no one there. He threw about twenty around that same spot but did not hurt anyone. Fritz’s artillery was pretty busy all day. He threw quite a few just behind the R.C.R. but did not do much damage. At four in the afternoon, hell broke loose again over at Hooge on the left of the P.P.’s. I don’t know who started it, but it sounded to us as if Fritz did and then our artillery let loose and as it began to grow dark, it kept getting worse all the time. When it was real dark it was a sight to watch it. The flash of the guns and the explosion of the shells, the shrapnel bursting in the air, and the flash of the high explosives as they tore up the trenches. There was red lights, green lights as signals going up in the air all along the line and the machine guns were working all the time. At about five thirty, they started at it on our right, down at St. Eloi so now it is going on all around us. The trench we are in is quite peaceful so far, but they are raising Caine on both sides of us and pretty close too. It is now nine o’clock and it is still going on and looks like an all-night bombardment.

Tomorrow is the anniversary of the day that Fritz used the first gas at Y\_\_\_\_\_ when so many Canadians went under and where he found out for the first time what kind of stuff Canadians were made of and I think the Canadians are going to remind him of that and on the same ground.

20 Apr. 1916 (Thursday). A nice fine morning. The bombardment stopped about daybreak. I have not heard any of the particulars yet about how it came out, but from what I could see of it and if I am any judge, I think our boys came out all right for I think they got Fritz rattled and slipped one over on him It is pretty quiet today. Fritz has not had much to say at all, but I think some thing is very likely to start tonight about dark. But when dark came, nothing happened. It was quiet all night, we had nothing to bother us but the rats, they are our worst trouble.

21 Apr. 1916 (Friday). A nice fine morning. Everything is pretty quiet. We threw some trench mortars over to Fritz about noon but we did not have such good luck this time with them, the third one exploded just above the gun but did not hurt anyone and the next one, the tail broke off but the bomb went over alright, the bed was not solid enough and it sunk, so we did not try any more. Relieved at five and walked out this time, got home about nine. There was a hot supper for us and some mail. I got three letters from Ray. About the time we got home there was another big bombardment started. It lasted till day light in the morning. It rained all night.

22 Apr. 1916 (Saturday). Still raining and it just poured down all day. The place is just flooded so we could do nothing but stay in our tent all day and as it leaked, like a sieve, it was almost as bad as being out of doors. Went to bed at nine, it was still raining, but stopped sometime in the night.

23 Apr. 1916 (Sunday). A lovely morning. The rain has stopped but everything is muddy, but the sun will soon dry that up now.

It must have been awful in the trenches yesterday and last night for they must have been flooded full, far away back near where were are, the creeks were all flooded and all the fields were just about floating and we thought we were awful lucky not to be in the front line yesterday and last night.

Went for a bath after dinner to the bath house but could not get one. Nothing to do the rest of the day but read a magazine. Went to bed at nine.

24 Apr. 1916 (Monday). At four o’clock we were wakened up very suddenly by Fritz at his old game of shelling the camp. They did not come quite so close to our tent this time, but they were close enough to make us get out of bed in a hurry. There was also an aeroplane of Fritz’s over us at the same time and it dropped some bombs on the R.C.R. \_\_\_\_\_\_ and killed and wounded twenty-two.

We are going to football game this afternoon between the 49th and the Irish Guards. The game started at two o’clock. It was a pretty good game, but we beat them five to nothing. Billy was tickled. I had supper down with nine platoon and in the evening, I went to the movies. They were pretty good. Came home and went to bed about nine.

25 Apr. 1916 (Tuesday). A nice fine morning. The aeroplanes are out pretty thick this morning. Rifle inspection at nine. Nothing much to do all day.

Went for a bath in the afternoon and got some clean clothes. I heard today that a Fepp and some aeroplanes flew over Pop\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ last night and dropped about twenty five bombs.

26 Apr. 1916 (Wednesday). Another nice fine morning. The sun is shining bright and we have nothing to do but sun ourselves. The leave starts again today.

Went to see a football game in the afternoon between the Scotch Guards and the 49th Batt. They beat us two to one. It was a very close game.

Was on guard all night on the cap. There was a big bombardment on early in the night, but it stopped about ten o’clock.

27 Apr. 1916 (Thursday). A lovely fine morning, it is awful hot. Nothing to do but get ready to go in the trenches. Left the camp at four thirty, rode on the wagon as far as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and walked in from there, about an hour and a half walk. Fritz was throwing a lot, shelling on the way in, he was putting some coal boxes into a piece of wood, near us, then he started putting them right over our heads into Y\_\_\_\_\_ and we could see the bricks flying in all directions and he was also shelling the railroad close to where we were going. Arrived in the trench all safe, about seven o’clock and then we had to go out to Z\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to meet the ration wagon. Got back to the dug out about ten and then went to bed and had a good sleep. Fritz was quiet all night.

28 Apr. 1916 (Friday). Up at six, another lovely fine morning. The sun is going to be awful hot again today.

The trees in San \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Woods are getting quite green or at least the ones that Fritz’s artillery have left standing and the birds are singing in the trees, just as if there was no war within miles. All that we can here is an occasional rumble of artillery in the distance. Fritz was pretty quiet all day, he did not put any shells very close to us at all.

Did nothing in the evening but read a magazine. Went to bed at eleven but was ready at a seconds notice for a gas alarm.

29 Apr. 1916 (Saturday). A lovely sunny morning and promises to be another hot day. Was carrying bombs up from I\_\_\_\_\_\_ to M\_\_\_\_\_ all day. Fritz was putting over some big shells near us in the forenoon but did not hurt anyone. The 49th are coming in tonight.

This morning I saw one of our aeroplanes after one of Fritz’s and he made Fritz dive for his own lines in a hurry.

We have been expecting a gas attack for three or four days, but it has not come yet.

30 Apr. 1916 (Sunday). Another hot summer day. Was carrying up from Z\_\_\_\_ in the forenoon. In the afternoon I went up through the front line to see some of the boys. “C” Coy is in the front line again. This time the trenches are in a lot better shape now than they were the last time the 49th were in here, the night they came in there was one officer and two signalers got hit. Fritz threw some big shells over in the afternoon behind San\_\_\_\_ Woods but did not hurt anyone. He made a gas attack down on our right about twelve o’clock last night, but our artillery caught him before he got very far.

At five o’clock in the afternoon we threw over four sixty pound trench mortars. They hit right in his front line and they sure made the dirt fly. It was pretty quiet all night and we had a good sleep.

1 May 1916 (Monday). A lovely fine morning with a very hot sun. Fritz’s aeroplanes were busy early and they must have seen something for they shelled San\_\_\_\_ Woods all the forenoon and he got some of the 49th and some of “C” Coy at that, most of them out of 12 Platoon. There was three killed Pte. Jackson, Pte. White and Pte. Omoroid and the wounded were Cpl. Warner, Cpl. Bonnet, Pte. Butters, Pte. McMillen, Pte. Miller and Lieut. Hobbs and there was a few more but I did not hear their names. It was pretty quiet all the afternoon. We had our supper about five o’clock and had just finished it and were sitting around outside the dugout and talking about what a nice, quiet evening it was, but we started to talk too soon, for we had hardly had the words out of our mouths, when Fritz let loose and the way they did come was something fierce. There was Wisers(?) bangs and Coal Boxes and Jack Johnsons, aerial torpedoes, sausages, trench mortars, Rifle, Grenades and hand bombs all coming at once and all into San\_\_\_\_\_\_ Woods. One half of the 49th was getting it and about half of the 68th(?). Well, we did not think it would last long, we expected it would be just the same as every other night, that it would last about fifteen minutes and then stop. When it had lasted about three quarters of an hour, it was just starting to get dark and so there was no sign of it stopping, we got ready for Fritz if he should come over the parapet when it got a little darker and sure enough he did come, the artillery stopped all of a sudden and Mister Fritz started to come across. But what a reception he did get, Fritz thought he had our front line leveled to the ground, and everyone out of business, but we were there waiting for him. Two got into our front and were taken prisoner, the others that were about to, they turned tail and made a run for their own front line again, but the most of them are laying out on no man’s land now for their trouble. One of the prisoners was an officer and he used to work in Australia before the war. The 49th had quite a lot of casualties before it was over and most of them were “C” Coy again. There was seven killed and about fifteen wounded in “C” Coy. Pte. Williams, Pte. Marlin, Pte. Silcot were killed and I don’t know who the others were. There was none of nine platoon hit. By nine o’clock everything was as quiet as usual and was quiet all night.

2 May 1916 (Tuesday). A lovely fine morning, had breakfast at seven and then went up to the front line to see some of the boys up there. They have got nearly everything fixed up again. It was pretty quiet all the morning. A Corporal in “D” Coy was killed by a sniper in the afternoon. At five o’clock we threw over 15 sixty pound trench mortars and we made Fritz sore and he came back with a few coal boxes, but I don’t think he hurt anyone.

Relieved in the evening by the Pats. Walked out to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Corner at eight o’clock and road home on the transport wagon from there. Arrived home about eleven and went right to bed and had a good sleep.

3 May 1916 (Wednesday). Raining this morning but it did not last long. The sun soon came out. Nothing to do all day but take it easy.

4 May 1916 (Thursday). A lovely fine morning, not much to do. Was firing some dummy trench mortars in the morning, just for practice.

5 May 1916 (Friday). Another fine morning. Was awful hot all day. We had a little excitement about ten o’clock. Fritz dropped a six inch shell into the middle od the camp. There was a bunch of us lying out on the grass in front of the tents and it landed not ten feet from us. If we had been standing up, we would have all been killed. As we all beat it away from the camp to the middle of the field there was two came the next time. One of them hit near our camp again and the other hit up the road about three hundred yards. We waited about a minute and there was two more came and they hit almost in the same place. The ones that hit the huts up the road killed seven and wounded twenty and the ones that fell in our camp wounded three. The ones that were killed were the 60th Batt.

I went to the picture show in the evening, but it was not much good this time. Came home and went to bed at nine thirty. It was quiet all night.

6 May 1916 (Saturday). Raining this morning. Nothing to do. Fritz did not bother us today. I went to the picture in the evening, came home and went to bed at nine thirty. Was woken up at two o’clock this morning and warned to be ready for a gas attack but it did not come.

7 May 1916 (Sunday). A fine morning. An inspection at nine. Nothing to do but clean out the tents. Fritz shelled \_\_\_\_\_ all the forenoon. It rained in the afternoon. Some of the boys went in the trenches this afternoon at four o’clock. I go in at seven this evening. The 49th Batt. comes out of the front line tonight, back to Brigade Reserve. They had it pretty rough this trip in but I have not heard yet how many they lost. There was two of our football team men killed this time. Pte. Whitehead and Pte. Silcot.

Left the tents at seven o’clock for the trenches. It had been raining all the afternoon but it stopped raining before we left. We passed one horse that had been killed by shrapnel, before we got to Y\_\_\_\_\_\_ and then going through there we had some excitement. Fritz was throwing some big stuff in the main Sqr. and when we came along there was one hit right on the road beside the second team ahead of us. It killed one mule outright and they had to shoot three more of them. One of the drivers was pretty badly wounded. We waited there for a few minutes to see of there was any more coming that way, but as there was none came very close. We started on again. We had got almost past the square when bang there was another one hit in the tumbled down bricks right beside us. I don’t know how it missed us. There was shrapnel and bricks flying all around us, but it never got a man. One of the horses was badly hit and they had to shoot him. There was one or two more big ones landed near us before we got out of the town but did not hurt anyone, but they made my ears ring for two hours after. Arrived at our dug out about ten o’clock, went right to bed and had a good sleep. It was pretty quiet all the rest of the night.

8 May 1916 (Monday). A fine morning. Up at seven and had breakfast. Was building a dugout till noon. It rained in the afternoon, so we did not do anything. Fritz was pretty quiet all day. He put a few small shells over but that was all, they did not hurt anyone.

Today is the anniversary of the second battle of Y\_\_\_\_ and as I write this, I am right on the same ground where they did the fighting this day one year ago, when the Canadians saved the day. The P.P.’s are here again and holding the front line beside us, though not many of the boys that were in that are here today. There was quite a bombardment going on in the night somewhere on our left.

9 May 1916 (Tuesday). Raining this morning so we did not do anything but stay in our dugout. There was a mine exploded this morning somewhere over at Hooge. It made the earth shake around here. The artillery were going to it as well but it is all quieted down now, it did not last long. Fritz was dropping papers from aeroplanes about a week ago, with notice on them giving the Canadians so many hours to get out of this salient, or they would be wiped out by the ninth of May, but we are here yet and I don’t see any signs of anything like that happening yet. Went for rations in the evening, still raining. Home at ten o’clock, went to bed. It was pretty quiet all night.

10 May 1916 (Wednesday). A nice fine morning. Fritz woke us up about daybreak with shells, he shelled all the woods, but he did not put them very thick, the were scattered all over the place but they were close enough for me at that.

At nine o’clock, I guided a work party out to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and brought another one in. They are building emplacements for trench mortar guns and some dugouts. I was told last night to be ready to go on leave at any minute.

Went to Z\_\_\_\_\_\_ for rations at eight o’clock and the sent a man after me to tell me to go out to camp, to go on pass in the morning. They sent up word by an officer for me to go out and he forgot to tell me so I had to go back in to the trenches for my kit and rifle and then do twelve miles from there to Pop\_\_\_\_\_ and catch the train at four o’clock in the morning. I left the dugout at nine forty-five, walked out to the end of the communication trench and was lucky enough to catch a ration wagon and had a ride right out to camp. Reached there at twelve thirty, fixed up my kit, got my pass and then

started for the station, about five miles, and again I had good luck for a motor ambulance caught up to me, just as I had started, and I got a ride right to the station.

11 May 1916 (Thursday). The train started about five o’clock and what a ride it was. I have seen some

(second diary) fast trains but that one had them all beat. We were six hours going to Boulogne. Got to Boulonge about noon and had to wait there about three hours, then we went aboard the boat, and such a crowd. The old boat was packed from top to bottom, but we had a good trip crossing. We were just an hour and five minutes on the boat. It only took a few minutes to get off and aboard the train. I was lucky to be about first off the boat and as each man put his feet on Dear Old England again, he put his cap on the top of his rifle, waved it around his head and then with a yell we went down the platform to the train as hard as we could run. I think some of the people that saw us thought we were crazy, well they were welcome to, I for one don’t care if the did, we wanted them to think so. The train was waiting for us at Folkstone and we left there ten minutes after the boat docked and we never made one stop till we were in the Victoria Station. There was an awful crowd of people there, thousands of them, waiting to meet their boys from the front. The first thing I did was to change what trench money I had for English, then I jumped right into a taxi and went to the Canadian Pay Office on Mill Bank St. and got my pay. It was too late to go to a show that night so I went and got a room, then I had a good clean up and a change and went to bed in a nice feather bed for the first time in eight months.

12 May 1916 (Friday). A nice fine morning. Up early and out to get a look at London by daylight and it is a treat to see it after eight months in the trenches. I walked down the Strand about noon. I was wearing my big boots just the way they were when I left the trenches, they were all over mud and there was mud on my puttees, pants and tunic and my tunic was all wrinkled from using it as a pillow. I looked a sight, but I walked down the Strand as if I owned the whole of London, and the way some of them looked at me made me laugh.

In the evening we went to the Hippodrome Theatre, it was a dandy show. There is quite a change in London since I was here last, it is as dark as a black cat here now, no lights at all.

13 May 1916 (Saturday). A wet damp morning and not very pleasant for going out but about noon, I went out for a little walk. I look a little cleaner this morning as I have got some of the mud off my clothes. I went down the Strand and along the embankment and took in all the sights.

14 May 1916 (Sunday). A nice fine morning, out for a look around in the fore noon. In the afternoon we went to Richmond and to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Gardens, and then to Hampden Court. We had tea there, then we went through the Palace grounds. Then we walked back through the Palace grounds and along the Thames River as Kingston Bridge that road on a car from there to Richmond. Then took a train to the city. Was home about eleven thirty.

15 May 1916 (Monday). A lovely fine morning. Did not get up till nearly noon then went to the city and had a walk around. Met a 49th on the Strand, a fellow from “B” Coy. He was wounded last January, shot through the hand. I bought tickets for the Palace Theatre for tonight and for the Gaiety for Wednesday night. The show at the Palace Theater was pretty good, although I have seen better shows before now.

16 May 1916 (Tuesday). A nice fine morning. Not nothing particular to do. Took a walk down the Strand and around Trafalgar Sqr., then I went to Waterloo Sta. Took a train and went out to Surbiton, to see Hampden Court again. Went all through the Palace this time, saw the Palace Chambers and the Picture Galleries.

17 May 1916 (Wednesday). A lovely fine day. Went to Hampstead Heath to see the park. It was fine. In the evening we went to the Gaiety Theater to see Tonight is the Night. It was fine.

18 May 1916 (Thursday). A lovely day, awful hot. Went to Hyde Park and to Kensington Gardens in the afternoon.

In the evening I went to the Prince of Wales Theatre. It was fine, awful funny.

19 May 1916 (Friday). A fine morning but was awful hot all day. Was downtown for a walk in the fore noon. Getting ready to go back in the morning but I may take a notion to miss the train and have one more day in London.

20 May 1916 (Saturday). A lovely fine morning. Up about eight, missed the train, reported at Victoria Station about eleven fifteen and got my pass extended till tomorrow. Then I went to Richmond and went to see Gardens. It was lovely, flowers all in bloom and everything looking glorious and I am beginning to feel sorry that I must go back tomorrow.

21 May 1916 (Sunday). A lovely fine morning. Reported at Victoria Station at eight thirty and caught the train for Folkstone. Went aboard the boat and had to wait about two hours before we left the dock. Crossed in an hour, it was nice and smooth crossing. We had another wait of three hours. Left there about seven o’clock and reached Poperinghe at about three in the morning. Then walked from there to the camp. That took me about an hour and a half and as soon as I was home I went to bed and had about two hours sleep before breakfast.

22 May 1916 (Monday). A lovely fine morning. Up at seven. It’s h\_\_\_\_\_ to have to back to this after ten days in London. It’s enough to break a man’s heart to have to leave England again after doing eight months out here, then go over on pass, it is fine to get over there once more, but oh its hell coming back. I went back to the Brigade Trench Mortars again today. I got fed up with the way they run that Div. outfit, it was alright for the first month, and then there was a new bunch from the CFA came over, they were put in the battery with us, they think they are somebody. They are out here one week, and they think they know it all, they have a Sgt. Major that don’t go in the trenches at all, he stays out at the camp and has a safety first job. And then when we come out of the trenches, he was going to have everyone shine their buttons and boots when we went on parade, but I said no. I quit being a chocolate soldier when we left Shorncliffe and that if they were going start them stunts that I wanted to go back to the 49th, but I went to the Brigade Trench Mortars instead, In the evening I went down to see the Boys at the Batt. They go in the trenches tonight. McHermiss is in the Machine Gun section now. Linnie is on the stretcher bearer job. The only ones of the old section of the bunch that I left Edmonton is Bob White and C. Harris.

Carberry was wounded the first time in at Hooge, shot through the face, but we have heard from him and he is getting along fine and will soon be better.

23 May 1916 (Tuesday). A nice fine morning, not much to do. Rifle inspection at nine o’clock. Was on guard in the evening from seven to eleven then went to bed.

24 May 1916 (Wednesday). A nice fine morning, though not quite so hot as yesterday. Rifle inspection at nine.

It is awful to have to come back and eat this grub that we get thrown up to us here after the good grub I had in London. I don’t feel like eating since I came back. It will be a month now before I get settled down to it again.

Went for a bath at four o’clock and to the pictures at seven. Back in the tent eight thirty. Went to bed at ten. Fritz has not bothered the camp lately. It rained a little about dark.

25 May 1916 (Thursday). Raining this morning but stopped about nine. Rifle inspection at nine thirty. Gun drill from ten to eleven, then it started to rain again so we went back to our tents. After dinner we went over to the Engineers dump for some sandbags and limber to build a magazine. It has stopped training and it is a lovely afternoon. In the evening I walked down to the old camp to see if there was any mail for me but there was not, but one of the boys got some Edmonton Journals, so I came home and read them a while, then went to bed about ten and it started to rain about that time. There is another big bombardment on down at St. Eloi again.

26 May 1916 (Friday). A nice fine morning. The rain has stopped, and everything looks fine. Rifle inspection at nine thirty, a lecture on the Trench Mortar from ten to eleven thirty. I heard today that the P.P.’s played the 49th a game of baseball, a day or two before they went in the trenches and beat us twenty to three. They beat the C.M.R. yesterday, but I did not hear what the score was. Went over to the picture show in the evening. It is right near camp. Was on guard from ten to one on the camp, then went to bed.

27 May 1916 (Saturday). A lovely fine morning. Going to be a very hot day. Was up at seven, rifle inspection at nine, had a letter and a parcel from Ray today, one letter from Curley and one from Bob. I heard this afternoon at transport headquarters, that Passey had been wounded since the Batt. went in the trenches, was hit by shrapnel in the head and the arm and leg, through none of them were very serious. There was a Fritz aeroplane over the camp this evening and there was pieces of shells falling all around us. The artillery has been fairly quiet all day.

28 May 1916 (Sunday). A nice sunny morning, going to be a very hot day. Nothing to do. The aeroplanes were busy very early this morning. About noon one of Fritz’s aeroplanes came over the camp again. Our anti air guns started shooting at him ad there was three shell cases fell right in the camp but did not hurt anyone. One of our planes was up at the time, and he went after Mr. Fritz and made him beat it for his own lines in a hurry. One of the trench mortar men was wounded this trip in the trenches, and he was supposed to go on leave tomorrow. Nothing to do tonight but go to bed at nine thirty.

The 49th has had ten wounded since they went in but no one killed.

29 May 1916 (Monday). A lovely sunny morning. Fritz’s aeroplanes were over here this morning at daybreak and the machine guns were shooting at him from the camp.

Rifle inspection at nine o’clock. About ten o’clock we saw one of our aeroplanes come down. I heard since that he was hit with one of Fritz’s shells and destroyed the steering gear. He fell almost straight down. The pilot and the observer were killed. He was up nearly ten thousand feet. At eleven o’clock went and had a bath and a change of clean clothes. After dinner I helped to carry the rations over from Brigade Headquarters. I was talking to Fred Sheldon this morning; he is just going on leave. Randal was killed yesterday. L/Cpl. Paterick of nine platoon had a brother killed yesterday with the 1st Battalion at Hill Sixty. I went to the pictures in the evening. They were about the Capt. Scott expedition to the south pole. They were very good.

Half the Battery went in the trenches this evening, left here about five o’clock. They were going in at Hooge.

One year ago today the 49th Battalion left Edmonton, at about eight o’clock in the evening by the G.T.P.R. There was two trains of us, a half hour apart.

The half Battery that was relieved got to camp from the trenches about four o’clock in the morning.

30 May 1916 (Tuesday). Raining this morning and was raining nearly all night, but I hope it will stop soon for we go in the trenches tonight. It stopped raining about noon. We left for the trenches at two, had to walk all the way. We went through Ypres and out through the Lille gate and reached Sanctuary Woods about five. Fritz was shelling along the road coming in, but they were not very near. We are in the same trenches with the 49th.

Hills out of tenth platoon was wounded last night, he was shot through the stomach. They did not think he would live at first but the last word I heard of him; he was doing fairly well. He used to work on the C.N.R. in Edmonton when I was there. It was quiet all night. Fritz did not bother us, and we had a fine sleep.

31 May 1916 (Wednesday). A lovely fine morning. Fritz started throwing over some 4.9 shells about eight o’clock, but they were all going back behind the supports and not doing any damage. About nine o’clock he threw over a sausage, they are something like some of out trench mortars, but they are very big ones and were nicknamed sausages because they looked so much like one when coming through. There is an awful high explosive in them, and they make an awful mess when they hit. The first one this morning hit just in front of the parapet and blew it right in, made a gap in it about ten feet across. The second one went down in the supports and the next one it on the communication trench but did not hurt anyone. He was also butting a lot of big shells into where “C” Coy is.

Our artillery was quiet all the morning. They let Fritz \_\_\_\_\_ away for a long while and never answered him once, until he threw the third sausage, then they let loose on old Fritz and his sausage machine and the way the shells were going over was a caution. There was big and small all going over together and they were going over so thick that it sounded like one long shell. They seemed to be almost touching each other going through the air, nearly five hundred shells landed around Fritz’s sausage throwers in about 10 minutes, and while it was going on, we chimed in with ten trench mortars into his front line. It was great fun while it lasted. But there was no more sausages come from that spot, he put over a few big shells after that but that was all. He is as quiet as a mouse now. I can hardly hear a sound now.

In the afternoon I went down to see the boys in “C” Company. They are in the front line a little on our left. They have had a pretty quiet trip this time. Fritz threw quite a lot of shells over, but they were all going behind and not hurting anyone.

Cpl. Parsons and the machine gun Cpl. went out last night across no man’s land and threw six bombs each into Fritz’s front line, he got awful sore about it and threw a lot of stuff back, but it all fell in no man’s land.

The 49th are being relieved tonight by the Pat’s.

Went on a working party from eight till eleven. Then went to bed and had a good sleep.

1 June 1916 (Thursday). A lovely fine morning. Fritz has started his dirty work again this morning. He is putting an awful dose of shells into Sanctuary Woods but none touching the front line. He threw one sausage over, but it was about ten yards short and did not hurt the parapet. Our artillery was pretty quiet all day at this part of the line, but there was a bit of a strawf(?) on down the right between Hill sixty and St. Eloi in the afternoon and about six o’clock Fritz started and shelled Ypres for about an hour, but in the front line there was not a sound to be heard. There don’t appear to be any one in Fritz’s front line all day, from about nine in the morning till seven in the evening. There is not the least signs of anyone being over there but the first part of the night up till about eleven o’clock he just raises particular hell, with machine gun and rifle fire. Then he is pretty quiet the rest of the night. Then in the morning after breakfast, he throws over a few sausages, then we hear no more from the front line for the rest of the day. His artillery does the rest.

There is no work party for me tonight, so I am going to bed early. I heard today that Hills died when he reached the dressing station.

2 June 1916 (Friday). A lovely fine morning. Up at five to go for rations down to Maple Copse. Was back in the front line at six. It is awful quiet to be healthy. At about eight thirty Fritz started throwing sausages, he kept that up for about fifteen minutes, then hell did break loose and he started in, in earnest and the way they did come was a caution, every kind of machine he had for throwing explosives, he was using them and for five hours he never stopped; and what a five hours it was. I shall never forget it. I never expected to get out alive. There was a fellow with me from the 49th from “D” Coy, Pte. Fowlie. There was three other 49th men on the trench mortar battery with us but I don’t know where they went, we have never seen them since. Fowlie and I stuck together, we were in the front line when it started, and we stayed right there. The P.P.C.L.I.’s were holding those trenches. They did not leave them. They were blown out of the. The little spot where Fowlie and I were was the only spot that was not blown sky high and for the last three hours of the bombardment there was not a man in the trench on my left for three hundred yards, but there was one or two still left on our right and we had to stay there, for it was safer there than to try to get back to the second line under that fire. At exactly fifteen minutes to two, Mr. Fritz came over his parapet. Before they reached our trench, but there was hundreds of them and all in full marching order, and each one with a long handled shovel and a rifle and when they reached our trench they started shooting liquid fire, so we had no choice but to beat it for the second line and a job we did have for they had us almost surrounded but we made a run for it. One fellow almost got between me and the second line and was not more than twenty feet from me when I saw him and he just pulled up his rifle to have a shot at me when I saw him, I did not give him time for a second one, it was a big mistake for him that he did not get me when he had the chance. There was two more close to him that I git a shot at before my gun was empty. Then I did a sprint for the second line. They were all flat, how I got back without being hit, I don’t know, for there was about twenty Germans shooting at me all the time. The woods was full of dead and wounded, from the shell fire, all that were able to get back to the second line went, we blocked the communication trench and lined the parapet or at least what was left of the P.P.’s. Every man that was able to hold a rifle had one and was shooting to beat the band. I fired about one hundred rounds without stopping and some of them were lovely shots, believe me. Well we held him at that part of the line. They never got half way to the second line at that but they broke through the C.M.S. line over on our right and going into our only communication trench that we had for coming in and out and a few got to Maple Copse, the first C.M.R. and some of the Pat’s cleaned them out of the communication trench, but they had quite a scrap for it. There was about twenty five dead Germans in the trench when it was over. The trenches were in an awful shape. They were all blown to pieces and there was very poor cover. The C.M.R.s were about the worst, the fourth and first were almost wiped out and there was no one in the trench to stop Fritz when he did come over. The few that were left fell back to the strong point and made a stand there, but they were almost surrounded. The Pat’s did well, they fell back to the second line and held Fritz there till reinforcements came. In the evening Fritz shelled the roads and communication trench to keep supports from coming up but they came just the same. The 42nd and the 49th and the second C.M.R.’s was the first reinforcements to come up. The 49th went in with the Pat’s and the others went in with the C.M.R.’s and twenty four hours after the attack started, they had lost about eighty percent and the 7th Brigade still held their reputations. The R.C.R. was the only Batt. of the Brigade that did not have part in the main attack. The P.P.’s put up a great scrap, there was not a possible chance of them holding the front line. It was almost impossible to live in it, though two or three of us did manage to come through it with out a scratch. I stayed with the P.P.’s till the 49th came that night.

I was right close to Col. Buller when he was killed, shot through the heart. I saw Major Gault when he was hit, shrapnel in the legs, he was awful bad.

The 49th arrived some time after dark, they came across the open fields and never lost a man, but they soon began to go when they got into Sanctuary Woods, but they did not do much, only sit tight till morning.

It was pretty hot all night. Some of the Germans got into Maple Copse about ten o’clock, but the 42nd came to close quarters with them and they were soon out of there. There was Germans four deep when it was over. The 14th and 15th Battalions made a charge about three o’clock and drove them off the ridge, east of Maple Copse but were pretty badly cut up.

3 June 1916 (Saturday). A lovely fine morning. The scrap is still going on. The artillery is something awful. Our artillery is only just beginning to wake up and now it is Fritz that is catching hell, but he still holds our front lone and a few little pieces of the supports. The 49th drove him out of Warington Ave. and Byland Ave. this morning. The artillery kept going nearly all day, it was something awful that night. We were relieved and sent back to reserve. We helped to carry out a lot of wounded before we left. That night we got a little sleep and a rest for we sure needed it.

4 June 1916 (Sunday). Another fine morning. The scrap is still going on. Our boys caught hell in the first bombardment when they made the first attack, but Mr. Fritz is sure catching hell now.

The Trench Mortar Battery that I am in is going in again this evening. We started at six o’clock and we were taking a Stokes Trench Mortar gun up with us. We were almost to the end of the communication trench at Zillibeke Village when Fritz started another big attack and of course he started shelling the communications to stop reinforcements from coming up. He threw both high explosives and shrapnel. When we got to the end of the trench we had to get out and go up the road and cross an open field, we did not expect to all get up the road without being hit for he was just raking the road with shrapnel but we made a run for it and all got there safe, and got the gun up all save and set up ready for business.

The artillery soon quieted down again. Fritz’s attack did not get very far for our artillery caught him this time. It eased down a but after dark, but ours kept pounding away all night.

The 49th took some of the trenches back that we lost but they had a lot of casualties. They have lost about 12 officers. Major Weaver, Capt. McLeod, Capt. Pinder(?), Capt. Gregory, Lieut. Arthurs were wounded and Lieut. Scott, Lieut. Wilson, Lieut. Carthier(?), they were killed and in “C” Coy, there was Sgt. McLeod of nine platoon, Sgt. Morgan of eleven platoon, Sgt. Wiseman of twelve platoon and Sgt. Wallace(?) of twelve, Sgt. Major Miles, Cpl. Smith, Cpl. Brown, they were all hit and there was more but I don’t know who.

5 June 1916 (Monday). A nice fine morning. Things have quieted down a lot. There is a little artillery going but it is nothing to what it has been. The whole Brigade is going to be relieved tonight or at least what is left of them. The gun I was on was relieved about eight o’clock. We walked into Ypres, we got a few shells going in but we got there safe. We went to Brigade Headquarters and got something to eat, then we caught a ride home to camp. All the boys that went in with us did not come back, some of them are missing, some of the are killed. We reached camp about twelve, and tumbled right into bed.

6 June 1916 (Tuesday). A nice fine morning. I slept till about ten and never woke. We had nothing to do all day but get cleaned up. Was expecting to move today but Fritz made another attack on Hooge, they sprung two mines on the 28th and got through the front line, so we were all standing to, in case that they were not able to stop them, but it did not amount to much.

I had a letter from Ray and one from Sophie and a bundle of papers from home.

7 June 1916 (Wednesday). A nice fine morning. Packed everything up ready to move but did not get away till three o’clock. The whole Brigade marched away together. The 7th Brigade General was at the camp and watched us march away. He is all ticked to pieces with the scrap we put up for to hold Sanctuary Woods. We marched through Poperighe back to a place called Steenvorde. It was about eight miles. We are in a barn this time with lots of clean straw. It is an awful pretty place right in a woods, about the prettiest place I have seen in this country. We went to bed at ten o’clock and had a good sleep.

8 June 1916 (Thursday). A lovely fine morning. We did not get up till about ten ‘o’clock. Nothing to do but take it easy all day. Walked out around to size up the country and the farms around here and to try and forget the past four days. Walked into town in the afternoon about a mile and a half, had a bath and a change of clothes, a general clean up. I Have not seen any of the boys from the Batt. since we moved.

9 June 1916 (Friday). Another fine day. Nothing to do again today, but stroll out around those fields and enjoy the nice sweet smell of the flowers. In the afternoon we walked to town and was paid at Brigade Headquarters. In France 1 year today.

10 June 1916 (Saturday). A nice fine day. Rifle inspection at 9:30 then physical drill from ten to eleven o’clock. In the afternoon McGuire and I took the mail to Brigade P.O. and brought back what there was for the Battery. In the evening I went for a walk around through the fields, for this place looks so much lie Alma and Montrose. Went to bed about ten, some of the boys had been to town and they came home about ten thirty with a skin full. It started to rain about eleven and it just poured till morning.

11 June 1916 (Sunday). A nice fine morning, not much to do. In the afternoon I went over to see some of the boys at the Batt. There is not many of the old lot left and what is left has got stripes, corporals and sergeants. There was a draft of four hundred and fifty came last night. They were from the 66th Battalion. I stayed over there for supper and walked home in the evening, when about halfway home it started to rain, and I was soaked to the skin but got home about nine o’clock. It rained most of the night.

12 June 1916 (Monday). Still raining, nothing to do but write a letter and stay in out of the rain.

13 June 1916 (Tuesday). Still raining. Stayed in the barn and kept dry.

14 June 1916 (Wednesday). A nice morning. The rain is over and now it looks like some sunny weather again. Rifle inspection at nine thirty, physical drill from ten to eleven thirty. In the afternoon we had some gun drill, then in the evening I went for a walk up the road. There is some of the 1st Batt. of the Buffs in the other half of this barn tonight, they came this afternoon.

15 June 1916 (Thursday). A cloudy morning and looks very much like rain. The time was put ahead an hour last night at midnight, up at six but the real time was five o’clock.

Moving again today. The only decent billet we have ever been in, I expect they thought it was too good for us. Left the billet about nine thirty, about an hour’s march to our new billet. It is on the opposite side of Steenvorde from the last billet, and quite near the 49th. In the evening I went down to see the boys in the Battalion. Was home again at ten o’clock.

16 June 1916 (Friday). A lovely fine day with a little sunshine for a change. Rifle inspection at nine thirty, gun from ten till twelve. Walked over to the bombers billet in the afternoon. Walked into town in the evening for a few minutes, came home about nine. There is a big bombardment going on in the salient.

17 June 1916 (Saturday). A lovely hot day. Rifle inspection at nine o’clock, physical drill from 9:30 till eleven and gun drill from eleven till twelve. Nothing to do in the afternoon. I walked over to the P.P.’s to see George B\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ but he is in the hospital with shell shock.

In the evening I walked down the road in the direction of the 49th Batt. and saw a little excitement. Some civilians with about half a jage(?) on were having a free for all fight along the road when we were coming home, and we stopped to watch it. It was great fun. There was about ten of them mixed up in it and a woman trying to stop them. Came home about ten o’clock and went to bed.

18 June 1916 (Sunday). A lovely fine morning. Rifle inspection at nine, physical drill from nine thirty till eleven. In the afternoon wend down to Brigade Headquarters and were paid twenty Francs. Nothing to do in the evening.

19 June 1916 (Monday). A fine day. Rifle inspection at nine o’clock. At ten o’clock I went down to town to Brigade P.O. for the Battery’s mail. Nothing to do in the afternoon. We had a concert in the evening, in the billet and our C.O. and R.C.R. officer supplied free beer to all the boys. There is a story going around that we are going in the Salient again Wednesday.

20 June 1916 (Tuesday). A nice sunny day. Rifle inspection at nine, physical drill from ten to eleven. At two o’clock we marched down to Steenvoorde and were put on motor lories and taken to Poperinghe for a bath and it was a good one, with new clothes. When we were through the lories were waiting to take us home again. Arrived home just in time for supper. After supper I walked to see the boys at the Batt. They are moving in the morning at seven o’clock, off to the trenches again. General \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ inspected them yesterday, then he gave them a lecture after. He gave them great praise for the work they did in Sanctuary Woods. I got hoe about ten o’clock.

21 June 1916 (Wednesday). A lovely fine morning. Rifle inspection at nine, then we packed up ready to move in the afternoon. The Batt. went up in Motor lories. They passed our billet about ten o’clock. One half of the Batter had to walk and the rest of them rode on the lorie that took the guns down. I was lucky and rode on the lorie. We left the billet about six o’clock in the evening. We went through Steenvoorde and Poperinghe and arrived at the camp about eight. We are in the same old camps that we were in when we left here two weeks ago. We had some tea and went right to bed.

22 June 1916 (Thursday). A very hot day. It seems natural to hear the guns again, though none of us were breaking our necks to come back where we could hear them. For a start Mr. Fritz threw over about a dozen shells near the camp tis morning, then about eleven o’clock there was a scrap in air over the camp. One machine fell down, but we could not tell if it was a Fritz or one of our own. They had got too far away to see. Went to the pictures in the evening. Went to bed about ten, slept out in the field because the rats were too thick in the hut.

23 June 1916 (Friday). A nice fine morning. Rifle inspection at nine thirty, then from nine thirty till noon we were fixing up the camp and getting everything straightened out and put up some tents.

About three o’clock there was a mine went up somewhere near Hill 60. Then there was a big bombardment all the afternoon. At six o’clock there was a big thunderstorm started and it rained to beat the band. It rained nearly all night. Wollard came home from leave today.

24 June 1916 (Saturday). Raining this morning but stopped about nine o’clock. Rifle inspection at ten. Went to Brigade Headquarters for rations at eleven. Nothing to do in the afternoon. Went to the picture show in the evening. Capt. Leversay? was killed last night by a bomb. He was the first officer I ever drilled under. He was one of the best.

25 June 1916 (Sunday). A lovely fine morning. Rifle inspection at 9:30. Nothing to do the rest of the day but get ready to go in the trenches. We leave here at six in the evening. Did not get away from camp till about eight thirty. Went in by the Belgium Chateau. Just as we got to Ypres as we were crossing the Bridge over the canal there was a shell dropped right in the middle of the road in front of us. He kept them coming, thick and fast for about half an hour. Then he quits and as soon as he was through, we started on again. Went to the ramparts and reported to Brigade Headquarters. The relief was cancelled so we did not go any further. We slept in the dugouts in the ramparts. There was a bit of a bombardment some time in the night, it woke me up.

26 June 1916 (Monday). A fine nice morning. Fritz woke us up about nine o’clock with a few shells around the door of the dugout, but he did not hurt anyone. Nothing to do all day. We left the ramparts about ten thirty for the trenches. We marched in behind “A” Coy of the P.P.’s. We went to the Half Way House first and part of the Battery stayed there and the others went to Sanctuary Woods and Hooge. I was on one of the guns that went to the Woods. We lost our way going in through the woods and we came to a trench about twenty feet deep and I knew that we did not have any trench the way it was and I thought at first that we had some how got across to Fritz’s but it was not. Fritz had been in it. It was one of the trenches that he took from us on the 2nd of June but he was driven out again. It was almost breaking day when we found the place we were looking for. The crew we relieved just had about enough time to get out before it was clear enough to be seen. As soon as it got day light, Fritz let loose again with his artillery on Sanctuary Woods. The 49th are in this time, they came in last night.

27 June 1916 (Tuesday). It looks like rain this morning. Fritz’s artillery let loose at four o’clock and the way he did let the shells come was a corker, one hour and a half he kept it up and my luck seems to still be with be. There was four of us on the gun, two were killed and the other one was badly wounded and we were all standing together within two feet of each other and all I got was a little piece of shrapnel in the knee and a smash in the face from something. It gave me a black eye and a sore nose, but it did not hurt me much. The four of us got it from the same shell. It was not very long after that the bombardment stopped. We thought Fritz was coming over, but he did not try it and we were ready for him if he had. It was a great relief when the noise stopped. He did not bother us again all day and as there is no communication trench left for us to come in and out through, so we have to stay in there all day and not move or show ourselves till night. We were wet to the skin from head to foot and there was no sun all day and all we could do was sit there and shiver. It was the longest day I ever put in, but night came at last. I took the barrel of the gun back to the supports and left it there. The fellow that was wounded with me was able to walk so I took him and started for the dressing station at Zillebeke dugouts. We had another gun and crew in the strong point, so I reported there as I was going out. They did not know anything about it till I told them. We were almost out to the dressing station when Fritz opened up on the roads and he caught quite a lot of horses, but we got through safe. Arrived at the dressing station about one o’clock in the morning. The doctor bandaged us up again. I was not very bad, but he sent me to the hospital. We had to walk again from the dugouts to Ypres and from there we had a motor ambulance to Poperinghe.

28 June 1916 (Wednesday). A rainy morning. I am feeling much better now since I had a bath and a change of dry clothes. Nothing to do all day but take it easy. There is some good cooked grub here for a change and a good bed. Went to bed about seven in the evening but could not sleep very good for the first time since I have been in France. I would get about half asleep and start to dream of those shells bursting all around us. Then I would wake with a jump and in a cold sweat. But I think I will be all right with a few days rest.

29 June 1916 (Thursday). A nice fine morning. Nothing to do but take it easy but I asked to be sent back to the trench mortar camp today. I will be just as well there as in the hospital, for I won’t have to go in the trenches for about three weeks anyway, so I would rather be in the camp where I know the boys than in the hospital where I know no one. Some of the 49th were with me coming down to here, but they were worse than I was, so they are on their way to dear Old England. Some of them were out of my old platoon. There was Sgt. Major Parsons, he used to be Cpl. of my section but is now C.S.M. He was hit in the head with shrapnel. And there was Sgt. Seabroke, he was hit in the face with shrapnel. And there was some new men hit, that were in for the first time. I came back from the hospital about noon. They brought me over in the motor ambulance to the camp. The rest of the Battery were relieved tonight and they arrived in camp about five o’clock in the morning. They were relieved by the 9th Brigade Trench Mortars. Received two letters from Ray.

30 June 1916 (Friday). A cloudy cold morning. Not much to do. There is a lot of bombarding going on today. It seems to be all along the line, and I think it is ours that is doing it. In the evening there was about eight of our aeroplanes started over to Fritz’s lines. It was a nice clear evening and we could see them till they were well over his lines and the shells were exploding so thick around them that it was hard to tell which was the planes when they were over so far they turned and came back. There must have been at least five thousand shells fired at them in about twenty minutes and they all came back safe. I went to the picture show in the evening. They were real good for a change.

1 July 1916 (Saturday). A lovely fine day and “Dominion Day”. One year ago, today I was having a good time in England but did not know it.

Went down to get a bath and a change of clothes but could not get one

In the afternoon I went over to C Camp to see the boys. They cam out last night, some more of my platoon got it. Watkins was killed and Leo. Maile was hit pretty bad. “C” Coy was getting paid about four o’clock so I fell in line and got paid thirty Francs too. Was back home just in time for supper. We have had good news from the boys up the front today, they are raising hell with Fritz all along the line and our artillery are bombarding him every where and I think the big attack is on its way. About seven o’clock a real bombardment started, and I was told it is from Kemnel to La\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It was fine to list to it and think how Mr. Fritz will b squealing, for he sure is getting it handed to him now. Down the line a piece it never eased up a bit till almost daybreak. The whole earth was a continual tremble.

2 July 1916 (Sunday). A nice fine morning. Things seem to be a lot quieter this morning than usual. Church parade at ten, out on the grass, dismissed about eleven.

Nothing to do the rest of the day. Good news from down the line today. In the evening about eight there was a big scrap started up on the left of Hooge. We could see our guns flashing and the shrapnel bursting from our camp and there was a lot of signals going up, red lights and green lights. It was a sight. We went to bed about ten o’clock and was almost asleep when we heard an aeroplane in the air above us. We listened to it for a few minutes and heard a bomb coming. They come down through the air so fast that they whistle just like a shell. The first one hit about a quarter of a mile from us. Mr. Fritz flew right over our head then and dropped another one on the other side of us near the 42nd lines but I don’t think he hurt anyone. Our artillery \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Fritz in pretty good style all night.

3 July 1916 (Monday). A cloudy morning. Carried some water for the cooks after breakfast, then took a message up to the 49th Orderly Room. Got back just in time for dinner. In the afternoon four of us went to Brigade for rations, then we had nothing to do the rest of the day. We went to the picture show in the evening, it was pretty good.

Two more men came to the Trench Mortar from the 49th. They were from my platoon. Wollard and McNaughton.

It started to rain about two o’clock, some of the boys were sleeping out in the grass and they had to come in. The artillery were raising hell around Sanctuary Woods about three o’clock.

4 July 1916 (Tuesday). A cloudy dam morning. Rifle inspection at nine. In the afternoon there was pay parade over at Brigade Headquarters. I went too though I did not expect to get any as I was paid thirty Francs two days ago, but I was first man into the office and he never noticed my pay book, but the next man in was Crozier and he noticed his, that he was paid the day before and he would not give him any, but I had my fifteen Frans in my pocket and was out the door by that time, the paymaster called for me to come back but I was beating it down the road.

It started to rain about four o’clock and it just poured down for about three hours but it cleared up before bed time.

There was quite a lot of artillery going all night.

5 July 1916 (Wednesday). A damp cloudy morning. Rifle inspection at nine thirty. Walked over to the Battalion in the afternoon to see the boys. In the evening I went to the picture show, it was real good this time.

6 July 1916 (Thursday). A nice fine morning. Rifle inspection at nine thirty. The rest of the Battery went for a route march, but I was not on it.

Brigade sports were held this afternoon near A Camp, not far from the 49th Camp. There was lots of fun. The 49th did not get as many prizes this time as they did last spring, but as it was they got a fair share. They won the tug-of-war again as usual. They have never been beaten yet. There was one accident, a 42nd Major was thrown off his horse and the horse fell on him, he was pretty badly hurt and was carried away unconscious.

I came back to camp about seven o’clock. It was quiet all night.

7 July 1916 (Friday). A nice fine morning. Rifle inspection at nine thirty. Nothing to do all day. In the evening we went to the picture show. It was pretty good. There was an aeroplane over the camp about eleven o’clock. It rained a little in the night.

8 July 1916 (Saturday). A nice fine day. Rifle inspection at nine thirty. I got put on the pig in the afternoon for insolence to an N.C.O. but I only got a calling down.

9 July 1916 (Sunday). A lovely fine day. Church parade at ten o’clock. Got ready to go in the trench in the evening. Left the camp at eight o’clock. I am in charge of one of the guns this trip. There was a big bombardment started about five o’clock and it looked to be about in Sanctuary Woods for it was making an awful smoke. We could see it from the camp before we left. It was Fritz that started it, but our side gave him hell till about eleven o’clock, then it quieted down. He was throwing some shrapnel over the roads when we were going in, he was pretty close to us once but did not hurt anyone. We did not reach the trench we were going to till about two o’clock. We set the gun up and got things straightened out and by that time it was daylight. We have to stay under cover all day.

10 July 1916 (Monday). A nice fine morning. Slept till nearly noon. We have a kind of dugout, but it is not up to much. Fritz started shelling about three o’clock just a little on our left. He was throwing some awful big stuff and kept it up for about an hour. In the evening, just about dark, our fellows started something on the left again, where the Imperials are. They started throwing the new liquid fire bombs. As soon as the first one hit, Fritz started shooting up green and red flares for his artillery to get in action. It was the prettiest fire works I ever seen. There was lights of all colors, then the shrapnel and high explosives began to come, but I think they chased Fritz out of his front line. It was hell for about two hours, then it stopped. Our officer was around to see us about midnight to how we were getting along. About two a big bombardment started down around Kemnel and lasted till daybreak.

11 July 1916 (Tuesday). A nice fine day. Fritz was fairly quiet today. He put over a few high explosive shrapnel shells in the afternoon but that was all and it was pretty quiet all night. Capt. Russell was around about daybreak.

12 July 1916 (Wednesday). A fine clear day. It was quiet all day in front of us, but on our left over on top of the ridge, Fritz started raising hell again about three o’clock. He kept it up nearly all the afternoon. Two of the crew went tow the Half Way House for rations about midnight. They brought back some mail also and I got a parcel from Laura. It was quiet all night.

13 July 1916 (Thursday). A dark cloudy day and looks like rain. Fritz started his dirty work about twelve thirty and before he finished he put one through our dugout and we had the barrel of the Stokes gun in the dugout at the time and it hit it and put it out of business, so in the evening we had to take it down to the Half Way House and brought back a new one. It started to rain about six in the evening and rained till nearly midnight. It was quiet the remainder of the night.

14 July 1916 (Friday). Cloudy and misty in the morning but cleared off about noon. The artillery was also quiet till noon, but then it started in. Fritz threw over quite a few but ours gave him hell today all over. They are giving it to him down on the right somewhere. He threw some over on the roads in the evening, but he did not bother the trench we are in. As soon as it got dark, we had some work to do on our emplacement. Worked on it till one o’clock, then two of the boys went down to the Half Way House for rations. They were back again at two. They brought some mail with them. There was a letter for me and a parcel from Ray. Capt. Russell came around to see us about three o’clock. Then I went to bed for a little sleep.

15 July 1916 (Saturday). A lovely fine morning. Fritz did not bother us till about twelve thirty, then he started throwing some big ones around near our dugout. He kept it up for about a half hour, then he changed to someplace else. He did not bother us again all day but he was giving the front line hell all the afternoon. In the evening our artillery was making the dirt fly in his front line, in front of Sanctuary Woods. We worked on our emplacement till about two o’clock, then we went to our dugout, intending to have an hours sleep before daybreak, but there was no such luck for us; we had been in the dugout about fifteen minutes when bang, there was a coal box hit the trench about fifty yards from us, so we beat it out of the dugout to the trench. The second one hit right in front of our dugout, not fifteen feet from it, but did not hurt anyone. The next half dozen were down at the other end of the trench, then he started coming up our way again and he dropped one right in the trench. It was just around the corner not more than fifteen feet away from me and the trench was nearly full of men, all R.C.R. There was two killed and seven wounded. One was an officer. He put over one more shell after that, then he stopped. He did not bother us again all night, but there was no such thing as sleep after that.

16 July 1916 (Sunday). A cloudy cold morning. Fritz started shelling about nine o’clock this time and he kept it up all day. He was shelling all around us but none of them were close enough to be dangerous. It started to rain about dark and it looks like a few wet days. Capt. Russell came around to see us about two thirty. About three o’clock Fritz sent over about fifty shells somewhere near Ypres. They were going straight over our heads. I thought he might give us a few but he did not, so we had a little sleep.

17 July 1916 (Monday). A lovely warm day. Fritz did not bother us so we slept till noon, but our artillery is giving him hell on both sides of us down around Kemnel. There is something big on. In the evening we were relieved. The crew from the Half Way House took the gun that we had up to Sanctuary Woods, as there is something special on tonight up there and I took my crew back to the Half Way House. We have one ore day to put in there, then we go out. The stunt in Sanctuary Woods did not come off. The moon was too bright. It was a bombing raid on Fritz’s trench from the \_\_\_\_\_ Bridge. One from each Batt. in the front line, they were to go over in three places and bomb him out and take two or three prisoners if possible. The P.P.s were the only ones that got his trench. We could see it from where we were. It sure was some shower of bombs. I will bet that Fritz moved out of there quicker than he ever moved before. I heard they got some prisoners but don’t know if it is true or not. We expected the P.P.’s would catch hell from his artillery for that stunt but there was nothing came back but a few rifle grenades. We got to bed about three thirty and as Fritz was pretty quiet the rest of the morning, we slept till nearly two in the afternoon.

18 July 1916 (Tuesday). A lovely fine day. Fritz was raising caine around Hooge in the afternoon. He was throwing some awful heavy shells around. In the evening about seven o’clock he started in on the P.P.’s over at Mt. Sorrel and around Hill 60. He kept it up for about two hours. The P.P.’s got off lucky with only a few wounded but the 13th Batt. I heard had about two hundred casualties. It quieted down about nine.

Our relief arrived at the Half Way House at about one. I had to guide one \_\_\_\_\_\_ into the place I had been at all the week, was back to Half Way House about two, then we started for home. We got a ride part of the way home. Arrived at the camp about five.

19 July 1916 (Wednesday). A lovely fine day. I had a shave and a wash before I went to bed, then I slept till dinner was ready about one o’clock. The first good sleep in nine days with nothing whatever to worry about. Nothing to do in the afternoon but clean ourselves up.

20 July 1916 (Thursday). A nice sunny day. Rifle inspection at nine thirty. At two o’clock we went over to Brigade and got paid twenty Francs. Then in the evening we went to the pictures. There was an aeroplane over after dark, but he did not bother us. Went to bed about eleven. There was a big bombardment started about midnight by our artillery on Sanctuary Woods and Mt. Sorrel. It lasted nearly all night.

21 July 1916 (Friday). A nice sunny morning. Rifle inspection at nine thirty, gun drill from eleven till noon. In the afternoon we went for a bath and had some clean clothes. The e49th are not out of the trenches yet. They had a pretty good trip this time. They only had a few casualties, but Sgt. Paterick that used to be in my old section was hit by a bullet just above the heart but will be alright. I had two letters from Ray today.

22 July 1916 (Saturday). A cloudy morning. I took the sick parade down to O\_\_\_\_\_ to the doctor. Was back about eleven thirty. Nothing to do in the afternoon. Went to the pictures in the evening. The 49th are in Ypres yet in reserve.

There is a story going around in the 49th that our C.O. is going to leave us for a bigger job. I hope it is not true.

23 July 1916 (Sunday). A nice fine morning. Rifle inspection at nine, church parade at ten. We had a football game in the afternoon with an artillery battery that is camped beside us. They beat us five to nothing.

24 July 1916 (Monday). A nice fine morning. Rifle inspection and gun drill till noon. The mail came when we were at dinner. There was two letters from Ray. We went to the pictures in the evening. They were pretty good. About five days ago there was an observation balloon put in, right near our camp. When we saw it, we allowed it about five days ago to live and sure enough as we came out of the picture show tonight, “bang”, there was a six inch shell hit about two hundred yards from \_\_\_\_ balloon. They had it down at the time, but they let it up before the next one hit. The cable was attached to a motor lorie and they started down the road to beat the band. They were letting the balloon go up all the time, until it was above the clouds. Fritz threw about eight shells; one went right to the farmyard where the balloon was and killed two horses and wounded three men and another one hit in a camp down the road a piece and wounded about ten. Was on guard all night.

25 July 1916 (Tuesday). A lovely fine morning. I was on sentry from four till six. Nothing to do the rest of the day. Was playing baseball in the evening.

There was a bombardment started just after dark at St. Eloi. It lasted about an hour. We went to bed about twelve.

26 July 1916 (Wednesday). A fine day. Up at six, breakfast at seven, ready to move at nine. We are going back to Steenvorde again. We left the camp at ten o’clock. It was a pretty hot march, but we did not have to carry our packs. We got to our new billet about four o’clock. Then I went up to the Battalion and got paid. We are in a dandy billet this time. It is near the one we were in last time, but it is a better farm. It is right near a big wood. The farmers are busy making hay these days and the smell of the new hay makes me home sick.

27 July 1916 (Thursday). A nice sunny day. Rifle inspection at nine o’clock. From ten till twelve we were out in the woods digging an emplacement for an experiment. Home to dinner at twelve then from two till four we were out digging again. In the evening, I wrote some letters but did not go out. Wollard went up to the Batt. and he had a letter for me when he came back.

28 July 1916 (Friday). A nice fine morning. Rifle inspection at nine. Out working in the woods at ten. Worked till nearly one then went to dinner. Out again in the afternoon but did not work very hard. It was awful hot all day.

29 July 1916 (Saturday). A lovely fine morning and going to be very hot. Out working on the emplacement again till noon. In the afternoon we had the guns out to try them and fired a few rounds of duds. Was on guard in the evening from eleven till two.

30 July 1916 (Sunday). Another fine day and awful hot. Nothing to do all day. In the evening I went up to the 49th to see some of the boys. Got back about eight thirty.

31 July 1916 (Monday). A fine day and awful hot again. Out in the woods again in the forenoon. Nothing to do in the afternoon.

1 Aug. 1916 (Tuesday). An awful hot day. Not a breath of wind and the sun is just scorching hot and moving this morning at that. Left the billet about ten. The dust along the road was something fierce. It was about a twelve mile trip. We stopped for an hour at noon and was at the camp about three. It is the same old camp near Oder\_\_\_\_\_\_. Went to the pictures in the evening. Things seem to be pretty quiet up here just now, for we don’t hear much artillery going. The gun emplacement that we build in the woods when we were back took first prize. Each Brigade built one, then the General came around to inspect them and he said ours was the best, that is the 7th Brigade.

2 Aug. 1916 (Wednesday). Another boiling hot day. Nothing to do all day. Was expecting to go in the trenches in the evening, was all ready but it was cancelled, so we went to the picture show instead.

3 Aug. 1916 (Thursday). Another hot day. Went for a bath in the forenoon but couldn’t get any clean clothes. In the afternoon about three o’clock, there was about thirty of our aeroplanes went over to see Fritz, but I have not heard yet what kind of luck they had. Started for the trenches at seven thirty. I am in charge of a crew this time again. I have Wollard, McMath, McIntyre on my gun with me. It was awful hot going in and a terrible dust. We passed the 49th on the way in, they are staying in Zill\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ dugouts tonight, but we go up tonight. We got our ration at the Halfway House, then went right up. My gun is at Lover’s Walk this time. Our artillery started something up around Mt. Sorrel when we were coming in and they are certainly giving Mr. Fritz hell. It was pretty quiet all night.

4 Aug. 1916 (Friday). A fine day but a little cooler. Fritz was pretty quiet all day. He threw a little big stuff over on our left a little but that was all. Our artillery never gave him no peace at all, they pound his trenches all day and he never says a word.

5 Aug. 1916 (Saturday). A lovely fine day. It is still very quiet. Fritz don’t have much to say, but our guns never let him have a minutes peace. In the evening about ten o’clock the scouts came in and reported that there was a working party of Fritz’s out in front putting up wire, about a hundred of them in it, so the officer came around for me and said to bring the gun, so I took fifteen rounds of ammunition and the gun out into no man’s land about two hundred yards from Fritz. We got into an old trench and set the gun up and got everything all ready and we threw those fifteen rounds over to Fritz in about a minute and what a noise, about six of them exploded in the air about ten feet up. I will bet he scattered pretty quick. There was some mail came tonight. I got one letter from Ray.

6 Aug. 1916 (Sunday). Another lovely day Fritz is still very quiet, but our guns are pounding him all the time, he don’t reply for he has more than he can chew down at the Somme. Our aeroplane are after him too, they have him almost chased off the map. There was about twenty of ours over his lines tonight. His air guns fired at them till they were tired or else they must have run out of shells for they quit at the \_\_\_\_ of it and let them fly where they liked and did not bother them. Our aeroplanes got tow more of his balloons last night. There was nothing but a puff of smoke and they were gone and now if he sees an aeroplane coming he pulls them down, he don’t take any chances.

7 Aug. 1916 (Monday). A nice fine day. Fritz is still pretty quiet. He threw a few shells around the front line in the afternoon, but our artillery gave him hell for it after. I leave here tonight, going up to St. Peter St. and the crew up there come down here because this place is quieter that the other place. It was quiet all night.

8 Aug. 1916 (Tuesday). An awful hot day. Fritz threw a few shells today, but he got twice as many back for his trouble. About dark, he made a gas attack a little way on our left, but I don’t think he made anything out of it. Our artillery gave him hell. Was working on the emplacement in the evening till about two o’clock. It was quiet all night. Our fellows were throwing a few bombs.

9 Aug. 1916 (Wednesday). A nice fine morning. Fritz is still quiet. Our artillery pounded his trenches all day. In the afternoon I threw over some trench mortars just to register. They were good shots. There was a lot of bombing going on all night. The 42nd went out and bombed him out of an advancement post.

10 Aug. 1916 (Thursday). A dark cloudy morning and looks very much like rain. Fritz’s artillery was pretty bisy all day and I think he is registering around Mt. Sorrel and Hill 60 and I think he is going to start something. He as been throwing a lot of sausages today too. The 49th are relieved tonight, they had quite a few casualties. Sgt. Gilbertson was killed the last afternoon in and Pte. Hayer and Pte Miller, all out of 10 Platoon.

11 Aug. 1916 (Friday). A fine morning. Fritz started in early with his artillery. He threw quite a few big ones into the supports behind Mt. Sorrel, but he did not hurt much. He was throwing in a few trench mortars in the afternoon and I threw fifteen back at his front line, so he stopped then. He was putting a lot of big ones into Sanctuary Woods about six o’clock. Our artillery let loose on him and soon closed him up. About ten o’clock Fritz started something at Mt. Sorrel again with trench mortars and sausages. It lasted about half an hour. We were relieved at about one thirty and started for home by the Half Way house, we had to report there, as we went out we went threw Ypres and expected to get a ride from there to camp, but we got stung and had to walk it. Arrived in camp about four o’clock in the morning. We are in the same old camp. We had a bite to eat then tumbled into bed.

12 Aug. 1916 (Saturday). A very hot day. Up at eight thirty and got cleaned up a bit, then we went over to Brigade and was paid. In the afternoon we went for a bath but could not get one. Went to the pictures in the evening. There was an aeroplane over here about two o’clock.

13 Aug. 1916 (Sunday). A fine day. Nothing to do. Was on guard at night from three till six.

14 Aug. 1916 (Monday). A fine day. Rifle inspection at nine. A little bomb throwing from eleven till twelve. Went to the pictures in the evening.

15 Aug. 1916 (Tuesday). A fine day. We are badly in need of a shower of rain. The dust is something fierce.

16 Aug. 1916 (Wednesday). A fine day. A little bomb throwing practice in the morning and threw a few live bombs. Went to the pictures in the evening.

17 Aug. 1916 (Thursday). A cloudy day. Rifle inspection at nine. It rained in the afternoon so we had nothing to do. Wrote a letter in the evening but did not go out. Was paid at four o’clock.

18 Aug. 1916 (Friday). A nice fine day. Nothing to do. Going in the trenches tonight and I hope for the last time in the Ypres Salient. We left camp at seven o’clock. We had a little shower of rain just after we left but it did not last long. We had a good trip in. Fritz was quiet all the way. Arrived at the Half Way house about ten. I am in luck this time, my crew stayed at the Halfway House this time. The other crews go up front. Nothing to do the first night but go to bed.

19 Aug. 1916 (Saturday). A nice fine day. We did not get up till noon. Nothing to do till night but cook our meals. At eleven o’clock I took six men out to the dump for us to meet the transport with the rations. Had to wait about fifteen minutes, when they came, we took them to the Halfway House and divided them. Then sent each crews up separate from there. Old Fritz is pretty quiet here just now.

20 Aug. 1916 (Sunday). Raining this morning. Nothing to do but cook our meals. We got orders at noon to clean things up extra clean for tonight. We are to be relieved by the Imperials. Kinross and I had to go out to Ypres to guide them in at nine thirty. They were late coming. They did not get there till twelve and they were about the slowest lot I ever saw. They had to go to the ramparts and then from there up to the ration dump. It was two thirty when they were ready to leave for the front line and our crews were so late being relieved that they had not time to get the guns out before daylight and had to leave them at the Halfway House till the next night. It was about five o’clock in the morning when we got away from the Halfway House. We had to walk all the way home. The first farmer we came to we went in and had some eggs. They had only just got up, but we did not care. Arrived at the camp about seven thirty, just in time for breakfast.

21 Aug. 1916 (Monday). A fine day. We went to bed about nine and slept nearly all day. In the evening we went to the pictures.

22 Aug. 1916 (Tuesday). A fine day. Nothing to do. Had a letter from Ray at noon. Getting ready to leave the Ypres Salient and I hope for good. We have been here five months today and I never missed a trip in the trenches.

23 Aug. 1916 (Wednesday). Nothing to do all day. Went to the pictures in the evening.

24 Aug. 1916 (Thursday). A fine day. Up at six, breakfast at seven, ready to move at ten. Left the camp about ten. We don’t know where we are going but we are on our way. Went through Oderdom, the Abeal, then through Steenvoorde, then Winn\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and stopped just outside of town. We have a nice billet and a very pretty place.

25 Aug. 1916 (Friday). A nice fine morning. Up at seven and went to Brigade for rations. We are about fed up with this job, so five of us went back to the Battalion at noon. Nothing to do in the afternoon.

26 Aug. 1916 (Saturday). Up at eight. Rifle inspection at nine, drilled from ten till twelve. Drilling again in the afternoon till five.

27 Aug. 1916 (Sunday). A fine morning. Church parade at ten o’clock down at “B” Coy. Was back at eleven. Was paid at eleven thirty. Nothing to do in the afternoon.

28 Aug. 1916 (Monday). A rainy morning. Drilling all the forenoon. In the afternoon the Coy was practicing open order fighting. Nothing to do in the evening.

29 Aug. 1916 (Tuesday). A fine morning. Drilling again in the afternoon. We went to the Div. Bomb School, about eight miles from here, to practice another attack and to throw some live bombs. We started home about three o’clock, when about halfway home it started to rain, it just poured down. We were well soaked before we got to our billet.

30 Aug. 1916 (Wednesday). Sill raining this morning and did not stop all day. Nothing to do.

31 Aug. 1916 (Thursday). A nice fine morning. The rain has stopped, and everything looks fine. Drilling in the forenoon. In the afternoon I had a pass to go to Cassel. It is a little town about six kilometers from the billet and right up on top of a high hill, where you can see for thirty miles in any direction. It is a flat country and you can see everything from the hill. Latimer was with me, we had supper there, then started for home about dark. Got home about nine.

1 Sept. 1916 (Friday). A fine morning. Drilled till noon, in the afternoon we were practicing open order fighting.

2 Sept. 1916 (Saturday). A fine morning. Drilling till noon. In the afternoon we were doing extended order drill. In the evening at six I went on guard, four on and eight off.

3 Sept. 1916 (Sunday). A fine day. Still on guard. The Coy was on church parade at ten. In the afternoon at two, we were paid fifteen Francs.

4 Sept. 1916 (Monday). Raining this morning. Did nothing all day.

5 Sept. 1916 (Tuesday). A fine morning. Up at six, out for a half mile run before breakfast. We had a little bayonet practice. Then we had a little march, then a half hour’s open order drill. In the afternoon we did nothing. At seven we were out for some work. The whole Batt. Just as we started, it started to rain and it just poured down, so they turned is back, but we were out long enough to get wet.

6 Sept. 1916 (Wednesday). A fine morning. Out at six for a run. There is rumors around again that we are about to move again but no one knows where we are going to move, but no one knows when or where we are going. Some think we are going to the Somme, some think S\_\_\_\_\_\_ and some say Arm\_\_\_\_\_ but no one will know till we get there.

7 Sept. 1916 (Thursday). Was made Corporal today. A nice fine morning. We did not get up till breakfast was ready. We have orders to move this afternoon, so we packed up and cleaned up the billet before dinner. We marched away from the billet at five thirty. We marched about eight kilometers to a little town where we were to get the train and had to wait about three hours till the train was ready. They put forty of us in one car. The cars out here are bout seven ft. wide and about eighteen ft. long. We were packed like sardines in a box. We could not move, and it is about a ten hour ride. It was one thirty when we got on the train, so we tried to sleep as best we could till daybreak.

8 Sept. 1916 (Friday). When I woke up it was daylight and we were just pulling into E\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. When the train stopped, I climbed up on top of the car where I could stretch my legs, and I rode up there to the next stop which was nearly an hour. Then some of the boys came up there and that left a little more room in the car, so I went inside. Then found a place to sleep and did not wake up till we got to the station where we had to get off, a little village called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We got out there and had to walk two miles to our billets. The farmers around here all live in villages and the country looks just like the prairie. We are nearly thirty miles from the firing line here but we can hear the sound of the big scrap quite plain, and I think we will be in it before long.

9 Sept. 1916 (Saturday). A lovely morning. Nothing to do but take it easy. The guns never stop down here in this part. They are going day and night. They were roaring all day. We are going to move again in the morning so we will get nearer to the big scrap every day.

10 Sept. 1916 (Sunday). Up early getting ready to move. Breakfast at six thirty. After breakfast, the farmer started raising hell about someone stealing his chickens. It was great fun; he was jabbering away, and the boys were poking fun at him. Finally, he went and got one of the officers and told him about it and I think they paid him finally, to pacify him.

We marched away from the billet at eight o’clock. We have eleven miles to go to our next stop. It was just a nice march; we did not have to hurry, and we had two or three rests on the way and arrived at our billet about one thirty.

11 Sept. 1916 (Monday). Up at five, breakfast at five thirty, ready to move at six, marched away at eight. Don’t know how far we are going. We had a big hill to climb just after we left town, about a mile long. We were just coming to a village called Jalmas when one of the advance party shot himself. I don’t know how he did it, if he did it on purpose or not, but anyway he did not live a minute, so they left me behind with four men to bury him. We dug a grave in the village cemetery and buried him there and put up a wooden cross with his name and number. Then we had to find our own way to where the Battalion was. We found it about three o’clock in a village called Rubempre. There was mail tonight, and I had a letter from Ray and one from Sophie.

12 Sept. 1916 (Tuesday). Up at five, breakfast at five thirty. There was a shower of rain in the night. Marched away from the billets at six thirty, only went about six miles today. Stopped at Vadencourt. We are in huts this time, in a woods on top of a hill with a fine view in all directions.

13 Sept. 1916 (Wednesday). Up at five again, marched away at six thirty. About eight miles to go today. Our camp this time is just outside of the town of Albert. There is no barns or tents for us this time. We are in a field with our waterproof sheet for a roof. We are not very far from Fritz’s old front line, where the big scrap started from on the 1st of July. The artillery is something fierce here all the time, it never stops day or night. It is very hilly around here, up on top of a hill you can see for moles and we are able to see the shells bursting near the front line from here. I was up on top of the hill tonight watching the guns and shells. It was a sight. The side of the hill and top of the ridge across the valley from us was one continual flash of fire. We are expecting something big to start soon.

14 Sept. 1916 (Thursday). Still in the same camp. Not moving today. When we do move, we go straight into the trenches. The artillery was going fierce all night. It never let up for a minute. Fritz threw about a dozen big shells into Albert this morning.

I have seen pieces in the papers telling about the towns in this district being so badly shelled and blown to pieces, but they are not a patch on Ypres. Albert is hardly hurt at all, except the church and it is pretty badly smashed.

Tonight is the big night. The artillery opens at seven all along the front and old Fritz will have the biggest job on his hands, he has never had before.

I was up on top of the hill when it started, where I could see it all. It was a sight. Every hill and valley was alive with artillery and every gun is talking. Our boys go over the parapet in the morning and I am quite sure that Fritz cannot stop them.

15 Sept. 1916 (Friday). A fine morning. The guns never stopped all night. We have good news from up front. Everything was a success. The Canadians did fine. They took all the ground they started out to take and took quite a lot of prisoners. A lot of them passed here on their way out this morning. We are standing to, ready to go in when the order comes. We take no packs, fighting order, and forty eight hours rations. The officers have their orders now, but they have not told us yet what they are. We leave here at three o’clock, marched as far as the chalk pit and waited there till fife fifteen. While we were there the officers gave us our orders. At six fifteen we go over the parapet, we have just time to go to the front lone and go straight over. At five thirty we started. We went about five hundred yards, then we came under Fritz’s curtain fire. The P.P.’s were ahead of us. They marched in, in lines of platoon, fifty yards apart. I watched them all the way in. The shells were falling all around them. Two or three times a shell landed in the center of a platoon and went the smoke and dust cleared away we could see about one third of them were missing, but the rest neither turned nor hesitated. They kept straight on. They reached the front line or “what was supposed to be the front line” for it was only a ditch and a few shell holes, about ten minutes before it was time to go over. The 49th, I don’t know how they got along, except my own Company, we were to support the P.P.’s and we came in, in single file. “C” Coy was leading and I was aright up at the front of the Coy, so did not see much of what went on behind me, except my own platoon, twice a five pound mine landed right in the middle of the platoon, but our orders were to get up there and everyone that was not hit had to keep going. The stretcher bearers stayed behind to dress the wounded. At last we got there, it was only a bit of a ditch, about one hundred and fifty yards behind the P.P.’s. Well we lined up in the trench and counted them and we had fourteen men left in my platoon. We lost Cpl. Hamilton, Cpl. Williams, Dunohoe, Libbie, Smith, Capio, Stevenson, Watson, Hunter, Harper, McKinnon, Sharp, White, McDonald and there was some others but I have not got their names just now. I think nine. Was the worst hit in the Batt.

At six fifteen, the P.P.’s and the 42nd went over the parapet. Old Fritz was watching, and he seen them start. Here and there his machine guns began to spit and he started rapid fire but he must have been nervous, he only struck for a second or two and before our boys had gone fifty yards he turned and ran and they ran so fast that the devil could not have caught them. Five minutes after the P.P.’s went over, we oved up into the trench they left. 9 platoon Sgt. was hit just as we were getting into the trench, so I was the only N.C.O. left in the platoon. We have to stay here till eight fifteen, then we moved up to where the P.P.’s were, right on through them about one hundred yards in front and dug our selves in, on the side of the slope. We went over in extended order and searched all the shell holes and dugouts for hiding Germans that P.P.’s might have missed. We had a sunken road to cross. There was about an eight foot bank on each side and on one side the Germans had deep dugouts all along it. In one of those we found thirty eight unwounded Germans and about twelve wounded ones. We called out to them to come out, there was only about five of us stayed there to get them. The rest went on. Well they started coming out of that dugout, one at a time, each one had his mitts up and they squealed like pigs. They thought we were going to shoot them right there, oh they were scared. But they nearly had us scared when we seen about twenty of them come out of that dugout and they were still coming, but they were all too anxious to be taken prisoner. There was no danger of them. We lined them all up on the road and searched them, then we sent four men with them to take them out. We had but two or three men wounded on stretches and we made the prisoners carry them out. As soon as they were away I joined my platoon again, then they sent me and one man out in front to find out where Fritz was and how far he was away and to get in touch with the company on our left as there was a gap between us. Well I found the other Coy all right and found out where Fritz was as well and was coming back in when a bullet hit the bolt of my rifle, splintered and hit me in the leg and hip. I thought for a second my leg was broke, the pain was something fierce, but it soon eased down a bit and I scrambled back to the trench and had it bandaged. There was another “C” Coy man in the trench that was shot through the arm so he and I started for the dressing station. The shelling had eased down an awful lot so we got through safe. When I got to the dressing station I could not walk much further and my leg was getting stiff, so they dressed my leg again and put me on a stretcher. We had to wait about half an hour for an ambulance. Finally it came and four of us were put in it and away we went for the C.C.S at Albert. They had to look us over there, then into another ambulance and then to a big hospital at a place called \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We got there at five o’clock in the morning.

16 Sept. 1916 (Saturday). A fine morning. They had a look at me here and fixed me up again and about noon they put me on the train to go down to the base. There is a whole train load of us and nearly all Canadians. We arrived at Etaples some time in the morning and was soon in a nice clean bed and went right to sleep.

17 Sept. 1916 (Sunday). When I woke up it was nearly noon and I was in a nice comfortable bed in a long tent and there was two or three pretty nurses all in white flying around. I did not know if I was dreaming or not for a minute. Soon after the Doctor came along. He looked me over and told the nurse what was to be done to me then marked my sheet for England.

18 Sept. 1916 (Monday). Still at the same place and still in bed, in hopes of getting away to Blighty pretty soon.

19 Sept. 1916 (Tuesday). It rained all night but it is fine this morning. There is a train load of wounded leave for England today. I expect to get away with them. And sure enough they came for me at eleven o’clock, carried me out ad put me in a motor ambulance. It was a five minute ride from there to the train. We were three quarters of an hour going from there to Boulogne. Went right on board the boat and she sailed at five o’clock. It was a little rough crossing but we were only an hour and fifteen minutes out. We landed at Dover but had to wait at the dock for nearly three hours. There was two boats ahead of us, so we had to wait. We were on the train again by one o’clock. I went to sleep as soon as I was in the train and did not wake up till I was being unloaded at the hospital.

20 Sept. 1916 (Wednesday). I slept till nearly noon. We are in the Middlesex War Hospital. Napsbury near St. Albans. It is a fine place. It used to be an asylum, but it was turned into a hospital. I am the only one of the 49th that is in this ward, but there is a few from the other Canadian Batts.

30 Sept. 1916 (Saturday). I have been here ten days now and am getting along fine. My leg is nearly healed up again. I have been up for three days now, walking around. Yesterday went for a ride on the bus to Golders Green(?) then I got off the bus and took the underground to the city.