**Preface: This diary was believed to have been transcribed by The Military Museum in Calgary, Alberta, and it is believed the original diaries are held there. Access to these transcripts was gained through an electronic file held at the Loyal Edmonton Regiment Military Museum.**

**-Editor**

June 15, 1916

I am starting out tonight on an undertaking which three years ago, I never thought possible. I wish to keep some small record of events which occur and shall try to remember to place them down in this book as they occur.

I shall pass over the leaves taken of my wife and little son, for I need no memorandum to enable me to remember that.

It is not 11:30pm of Thursday – June 15, 1916 and I have just embarked on the steam ship – Missanabie at her pier in Montreal. Eleanor has remained with her Aunt in Montreal.

June 16, 1916 – 10pm.

We left the dock at 3:30am. to-day. At 12 noon, we had arrived at Quebec. The scenery as we sailed down the St. Lawrence was grand. My old friend – Dr. Moles is with me, sharing same stateroom. Met Dr. Ford (Ship Dr.). He was H.S in the Western Hospital about 12 years ago. He seems to be a fine fellow. We are going to Halifax where we will take on more troops. About 40 Drs. Are on board (mostly recent graduates from Toronto) They are a good bunch. Dr. Moles, Dr. Fraser and Dr. Waterson (of Ottawa) and myself have formed a “Poker” quartette. We are going to play during the trip and will keep track of our wins and losses in a book. At the end of the trip we may settle up and we may not. We just want to have something to pass away the time.

June 18, 1916 – 12pm.

Just arrived at Halifax (out in Harbour). Were held up for 3 hours this morning by fog. Came in in a fog and drizzling rain but we were all on deck to watch how the pilot could bring his boat in through the dense fog.

June 19, 1916 – 10pm.

Busy all day loading troops. The Empress of Britain in waiting out in the harbour loaded with Canadians (3500) and battle ships waiting to convoy us across. We have loaded the 97 Battalion (Ottawa), Engineers (Ottawa) No. 4 Clearing Hospital (Winnipeg) and No. 9 Stationary Hospital (Halifax). Dr. Halkett of 77th. Battalion is a college chum of mine. Have succeeded in having a letter smuggled out for Eleanor.

June 20, 1916

Have been sailing through a dense fog all day. None of the ships visible. Fog horns blowing continuously. We appear to be sailing in line – about ½ mile apart – protected by cruiser. A peculiar complication of affairs occurred today. Can not place it on record, but will say “morse code.”

June 22, 1916

Order issued that all men on board must wear life belts continuously. Sports (boxing) among men on deck aft. Cruiser ahead spent morning at gun practise. I guess we are quite safe. A news paper has been started.

June 24, 1916

Have lovely weather, very few seasick. Have had life boat practice so that in case of accident everyone will know his or her station.

Had a sample of our Br. Navy’s protection today. A foreign boat appeared on the horizon. Our Cruiser signaled her and made her stand too – while we passed- all the while lying between us with her guns pointing toward the foreign boat. She put me in mind of a mother hen – protecting her chickens.

June 27, 1916

Have had exciting day – are in danger zone. There is a certain tension among men – though no one says much. All day expecting to meet up with Br. Drs – troops. At last about 5pm. they came, 1st. we saw a smoke on the horizon – to our North East – every one crowded on deck. In an incredibly short time they were upon us. Cutting through the waves. Throwing the water in a great sheet of spray over their prows. They are called the “The British Watch Dogs” – and are well named. They are very small boats – with high sharp prows and very low sterns. And depend on their great speed- their ability to turn and dodge quickly – their lowness in the water and their ability to ram a submarine. Their speed is so great that they can continuously circle battle ships and troop ships – always guarding them from the submarines. The Empress and Drake and two destroyers have gone on ahead. The little destroyer No. 5 remains with us. She is now scouting from side to side – with not a light showing. Our decks are well guarded by sentries and we have not a light showing.

Had a tug-of war today. Med men and officers of 77 Battalion. They won.

I am med officer of the day tomorrow and will have full charge of med duties on board.

June 28, 1916 9:30pm.

Just arrived in harbour at Liverpool. We gave the Destroyer a great cheer when she left us. When I awoke this morning we were within sight of Ireland. The 1st land we had seen for days. The scenery was grand. It was a lovely day. At places the land rose perpendicularly from the water in great cliffs of chalk formation. At other places it sloped up from the shore- forming the Irish farms. Fields of all shapes and sizes and colours; separated by hedges and stone fences – giving the appearance of great crazy patchwork quilts. The houses are all white and everything seemed so tidy. About 11 am. we passed The Isle of Man. The hills of the north rising abruptly out of the water. About halfway down the west coast I could see a town in a little bay. Someone said it was Peel. At the southwest corner a large rock – with a hole through it – rises out of the water. I hope soon to visit this little Island about which I have heard so much. After rounding the southwest angle of the Island – we turned southeast and made straight for Liverpool. Everyone on board is in fine spirits. Every boat we pass or meet gives us a reception. So I guess they must be glad to see us.

June 29, 1916 (At Strand Hotel London)

“My First Day in England”

After spending two weeks on board shop – my mind was in good condition to form ideas of the country for which we are all fighting. And the opinion formed of the Country and its people – raised both greatly in my estimation. The average Englishman tries to make his position in life appear to his fellow man – as great as possible and the more gold braid he can get on his uniforms – the better it seems to please him. Every official and civilian with whom I came in contact were exceedingly polite and tried to do everything in their power for our comfort. (of course they all expected their little tip). But above all other noticeable characteristics is their thoroughness. The regulation of their train service is faultless. The beautiful country through which we passed – showed the result of thoroughness of cultivation. Every available space was cultivated and cultivated so thoroughly that the grain fields appeared as gardens – so clean and tidy. The trim hedges (in lieu of fences) – the clean road sides – the excellent roads – the numerous solid brick arches of bridges- all spoke of – thoroughness. Little England might be summed up in every way a “Compact” My four hour trip was the most enjoyable railroad trip I ever had. The comfort of our first class compartment car – with its funny little speedy Engineer was all that could be wished. The houses are all of brick – with red tile roofs. The trees and the grass and grain at a very deep green – must have a little canal and have a wandering road. I would think that as I jumped out through the window that the scene was the grandest I had ever seen – only to have it surpassed in a few minutes by another part of the country. And every town and city through which we passed seemed to be a great manufacturing centre. The funny little two decked street cars are run by girl conductors. Everywhere in Liverpool one could see such big loads drawn by tiny donkeys. Everywhere the lack of young men is noticeable. So to sum up my first impressions I would say “England is a wonderful compact little hive of industry. The people and the beauty of the country are far exceeding my fondest expectations” – but my first impression of London (where I have been only a couple of hours) is somewhat disappointing. But I shall see more of it to-morrow.

July 1, 1916 “London”

I have spent two busy days in London. Sightseeing and from what I have seen it would take one a lifetime to see the city. Yesterday morning we reported at General Jones’ office in the Cecil Chambers and signed up. We were told to come back today which we did and were told to return on Monday. After leaving Gen Jones office (yesterday) we walked about the Strand – visited the C.P.R. office where I inquired about the “Metagama” There was no news of her cancellation. Visited Montreal Star and registered and went out to Kensington gardens. After lunch we boarded a “bus” – top deck and went out as far as it would take us and by the time we (Dr. Moles and I) returned it was dinner time. In the evening we went to a Theatre – it was a rather “ripe” musical comedy (bar in the back) but the acting and scenery was excellent. Cost one six ‘bob’ – for standing room. I am getting onto English money. Always feel ashamed to hand out pennies. Consequently I am sure I have about a pound (in wt.) in my pocket. Today being Dominion day, the four of us (Moles, Fraser, Waterson and I) had lunch at Lyons (I stole one of their menu cards) and after lunch took a taxi and saw some of the sights. The important ones were – Cleopatras Needle – St. Paul’s Cathedral – Bow Bells Church- Guild Hall – Stock Exchange – Bank of England. (I expected to see a tall building – but instead saw only one story building). Then we passed House of Parliament – Westminster Abbey- Whitehall – King Edward Arch- Admiralty Bldg. – Ivan Alexandra’s House – Duke of Marlborough’s house – Buckingham Palace – Arch of Triumph – Hyde Park – Albert Memorial, Kensington Gardens – Regent Park & The Geological Gardens. We spent the afternoon there. The more I see of the old city, the better I like it. The buildings are all so old & the streets so very confusing. The police are a fine bunch and have perfect control of traffic. But I think the London “Bobbies” prowess has been somewhat over estimated – and they are greatly assisted by the England people who respect authority and consequently very seldom break the rules of traffic. The bus drivers are masters of their “profession”, I cannot yet tell what a London girl or woman looks like for in the two days I have spent here – I have not seen one that was not painted and I must admit some of them very becomingly (continued use makes them perfect in the art). Taking them as they are made up – I have seen some very pretty ones. But all have the “English feet” which are about three sizes larger that our Canadian girls. Picadilly Street is a very interesting place between four and six pm – I dare say it might be more interesting after night if it were not for the fact that there are no light on the streets at present. In the majority of store they rob Canadians in their change – before they get onto the English money.

July 2, 1916 – Sunday

After lunch we went up to Hampton Court- about 12 miles up the Thames - took a bus as far as Richmond. Had something to eat there and then took the boat. On our way to Richmond we crossed Putney Bridge – the bridge from which so many of the boat races start. The Thames is a much narrower river that I expected. It was crowded with small boats and gasoline launches and as we got farther up may house boats line the shore. The scenery was grand – we passed many summer homes of celebrities. I am safe in saying we saw thousands of little pleasure boats in our sail up the river. Some of them contained “men and their real wives (few) – some “men and their future wives (more) – some “men and their temporary wives (many). Many of the boats were drawn up and anchored under the over hanging trees at the shore. Hampton Court is the old palace of Henry Viii – which he took from Lord Wolsley. It is an immense place – with its numerous Courtyards – lawns and gardens. In one of the courtyards is the famous old clock. The grounds are supposed to contain the finest rows and trees in the world. We went through the “Maise”. Returned by bus and had dinner at the Strand.

July 4, 1916

The big successes of the French and British still continues. The Canadians appear to be having a rest. Everyone here scan the papers very eagerly – but none of them show much emotion and no demonstrations. The English take things as they come and from expressions and actions one is unable to read either victory or defeat. I went to a show “Raymon Hiscock” of New York in “Mr. Manhatten”. I did not think he was anything wonderful. Today we got orders to proceed to “Shorncliffe”. Tomorrow morning. Spent most of the day up Regent St. and Oxford St. The big summer sale is on; there are many excellent bargains in women’s dresses. It is a good job Eleanor is not here or I would never get her away from there. Last night I saw a number of wounded soldiers taken from Charing Station to the hospitals. They were given a great reception and all seemed in excellent spirits. I heard that the Br. had made provision for receiving 500 000 wounded men if required – so I guess they mean business this time. I have not seen any London fog nor rain yet.

July 6/16 – Noon

“Shorncliffe Camp”

Left London 9am yesterday. Country not so pretty as inland. Large fields of hops. Arrived at Folkestone – had lunch at “Metropole” a summer hotel overlooking the channel. Took taxi cabs to Moore’s Barracks – the head quarters of Shorncliffe. Went through a lot of filling papers – (they had no word that we were coming). Marched from there to camp – about four miles= it seemed like 20; up hills. Through the dust – scarcely a camp in sight. Suddenly at one side of road could be heard the “spat-spat-spat – of a machine gun at practice. Our camp is on a hillside. Tents are all painted a slate color. They did not know we were coming – started to rain. Got our tents ready – by that I mean – stretchers laid on the ground for beds – with two pair of grey blankets each. One side of the tent had water and mud and tent leaked in a few places. Our furniture so far consists of our two trunks (Moles and I). They act as chairs- table wardrobe and all. I am holding this book on my knees as I write. Surroundings are different from Strand Palace Hotel but never the less I slept well. Met another of my college chums – Thompson McNeil – Graham Blair. 40 Drs here – last night 22 got call to leave this morning. They do not know where- France- Salonica. I have given up thinking and wondering. We are each a small pawn- on an immense chessboard – to be moved around as powers that be see fit. We are not asked – we are not told where we are going – nor what to do. The pawns must be sacrificed to save the king, do not know how long we shall be here. Climbed one of the hills over looking the channel – just at sun set. From far away across the water come the “boom-boom-boom” of the guns at the front. My first experience of hearing guns – that are killing – killing good men and for what? We mustn’t think. Had a shave this morning in cold water – down at the water trough. Set my glass up on the side of the trough. Mess is good and every one making the best of things. There is always someone to crack a joke. Things became rather tense this am – conversation turned to home and wives and children. I guess I started it by talking about Eleanor and Douglas out on the ocean. But we got the atmosphere cleared up by someone passing a joke.

July 7th/1916

“Are we down-hearted”. No – but very wet and uncomfortable. Tents wet and cold. No fire. Raining for four hours. I asked Moles if he would come down to the Frontenac Club- he said “no – but examine my head and see if I am dippy. Just think of leaving wife and family and lovely fireside and comfort to come over here and sit and shiver in a wet old leaky tent. But I would do it over again even if I knew what I was going to come to. It is bright now and everyone is happy again. I hear an aeroplane circling over my head. Last night a dirigible balloon circled over our heads. This part of the country is a summer resort in peace times. The Canadian camps cover a large area being placed mostly in valleys. There are about 40 000 Can. around here now. Was down to see the old 68th. last night. Only 190 of them still remain in England. Most Lumsden boys across. Saw Howe – McNiece – Pegg – Jones and Pietrie. The poor lads in France will have plenty to do. Was out with Col. Armstrong of Dental Unit yesterday. Saw T. Little today at Moore’s Barracks. A short distance from our camp is “Caesar’s Hill” – where Caesar made his camp in 54B.C – some of the Earth marks are still present on the hill. Saw the oldest house in Kent. Built in 13 – and occupied continuously since. Am at present in Metropole Hotel – Folkestone. Walked down from camp – about 5 miles. Am on my way to Liverpool to meet Eleanor. I hope she arrives safely. Will have done no work yet. Leave for London at 8:02pm tonight. This is the most expensive place I have ever struck. My dinner cost me 8 shillings ($2.00) about 10 courses and very little except dishes in each course. Scotch and soda 1 and 6 and tip (making almost 40 cents. Matches 3 cent box (ordinary 1 cent box in Canada) Everything is tips. If one asks a man a question he expects a tip and worst of it is one can not get service without them.

July 9th, 1916 – Liverpool

Came to Liverpool July 8th over some road we traveled before L,N,W ; met Major Harfeld of Wpg who was coming to meet his wife on Metagama. Stopped at London North Western Hotel. Went down to C.P.R. office found out about boat. Went down to boat at 2:30 to-day. There was a very anxious group on landing stage – we tried to make believe we weren’t and remarked how anxious and expected the women on board would be. Douglas spied me when they were a long way out and I thought he was going to jump out of her arms. I could hear the dear little lad shouting “Daddie-daddie” and he waved his arms frantically. Were allowed on board. Disembarked at 5:30 and are staying night at hotel.

July 11th, 1916 – noon Castletown

Got 3 days extension leave. Crossed on a little steamer “Douglas” they call it a “Steam Packet” The less said about the trip the better – as the sea was very choppy and our boat small and stuffy. Everyone was sick. I felt my stomach coming up my throat once for sure – had to swallow hard to keep it down. About the same time Eleanor said she felt a little seedy and “away went two shillings worth of good fried ham” Had dinner at “Eleanor’s uncle Georges” in Douglas. Did not see much of the city but it is very dead. Streets are very narrow and winding. Came down from Douglas at 8 o’clock on the funniest little train I ever saw. The rails on track are about 3 ft. apart and room in the coach for two people (ordinary size) to sit side by side in full width of car. We used to sell little engines like the one that drew us in the store in Lumsden. The Island is a pretty little place. The people seem reserved but very kind and obliging. Castletown is an old town reminding me of parts of the city of Quebec with its very narrow winding streets and old buildings. Met Eleanor’s people. Had a lunch at her grandfathers and again at her fathers. It is a great place to eat. As soon as one meal is finished they commence to get ready for the next. Saw grandpas apples. They grow along the stone walls like grape vines. My feeling is one of being cramped up – want to get out and expand. Lost my traveling bag yesterday but found it again to-day.

July 12th 1916 – 10pm Castletown

Raining and cold. Eleanor says she can’t get warm before the fire places. Do not know how they cook on them. They are so smoky and make so much work. Puts me in mind of camping out. Went through the old “Castle Ruskin” and King College yesterday afternoon. About 30 000 Germans interned on island. Will be unable to see much of Island as weather is bad. Every one is doing all he can to make my stay pleasant. It is good to be with Eleanor and my little son again. One who has never been away from his wife and child knows how good it is to be with them again. Every one thinks Douglas is a fine little fellow. He is just at his interesting stage – learning to talk and running all over and I have to go away and miss it all. Eleanor’s step-mother fusses over him. In fact every one does. Unless Eleanor keeps a firm hand over him (and I have my doubts) we will have a very spoiled boy when we return to Canada.

July 13th 1916 – 11pm. Strand Hotel – London

Away again. I can hardly say how I feel. I have no idea when I shall see Eleanor and Douglas again. Likely not for months. “Blue” sums up my feeling but when I get to work I should feel better. I am very thankful that she is with her own people. I shall feel much more contented and so shall she. She stood on pier at light house at Douglas and watched us until we were out of sight- with her uncle George. Had a pleasant trip across to Liverpool – no one sick. Saw the Olympic starting out for Canada for another load of troops. Left Liverpool at 5:20 and arrived in London at 9:30 and took a taxi to hotel.

July 14th 1916 – Shorncliffe – 8pm

Left London at 9:05 and arrived in camp at 12 noon. Time for lunch. Took my 1st lesson in riding to-day and it was some lesson. Walked from our camp up over the hill (2 miles) to Moore’s Barracks. Our horses were brought out and we took our pick. I got a fairly good one – but lazy. They had the little military saddle and the horses never canter – always trot. We had to go through some great stunts. Riding without stirrups – hands over our heads- clasped behind the head folded and behind our backs – the horses all the time trotting. I clung on with my knees until the muscles on the inside of my thighs refused to work any more. Then I was sure I would fall off. My legs are sore yet. After this we went through a lot of maneuvers. One of the fellows – when supposed to have his hands over his head was gripping the front and back of the saddle with all of his might. “Hey you on that bay get your hands over your head” said commander. “Not by a D – sight I’m not going to fall off this horse – but for \_\_\_ sake get me a step ladder.” As I write aeroplanes are circling all over the camp. I suppose I shall be a cripple to-morrow.

July 15th 1916 – Shorncliffe

Stretcher drill and physical exercise this am. Visited Folkston this pm. Met Cal McLeod – walked up the Leas. (the shore for two or three miles is fixed up for bathing – boating – several bands play.) spent a couple of hrs at Metropole Hotel. Visited Dr. Waterson at West Cliffe Hospital. Arrived back at camp 10pm.

July 16th 1916 – Shorncliffe

Wrote letters this am. Had lunch at Westgate. Motored out to Canterbury this afternoon ( Capt. Wood – Moles – Waterson and I) 17 miles smooth – winding narrow roads with hedges for fencing. Fields of hops and grain. Grain fields not as clean and tidy as in central England – considerable mustard and poppies in grain. Hops is one of the main crops here and planted in rows. Three or four feet apart – with stakes 12 or 15 feet high for vines to climb up. Farmers are having hard time getting hay cut. Owing to rains. What is cut is very black. Passed Kitchener’s Kent Estate (500 acres). House is far back among trees. Groves and grounds beautiful. The Canterbury Cathedral is a wonderful old place – parts of it being built as early as 400 AD. We were shown through by one of the Arch Deacon’s daughter. Asked us up to afternoon tea but had no time to go. Everything is old and worn. All the floors of stone and the walls of old masonry. Many of the chapels underground – dark-damp with a musty odour- so very different from present day churches. Seats are either stone or very plain wooden chairs. Most of the mason work is in a wonderful state of preservation. Many of the tombs are protected by immense piles of sand bags – for gear of German air raids. There is the tomb of the Black Prince and Thomas A. Beckett and many others. The cloister is just as the Monks used to have it – some of the walls in this part are badly crumbled. Left Cathedral about 3:30 – arrived back at camp 5pm. It is raining. Many aeroplanes have flown over to-day. On trip to Canterbury we met a battalion on its way to Dover to leave for France. I suppose by to-morrow they will be in the trenches. They were in heavy marching order – an advance guard – main guard- connecting links and main body. They were a serious looking group of men – vastly different from the bunch going out on parade. How many will find their last resting place in France. Some tried to whistle a jaunty air as they marched – but it seemed a hard job. But with all the seriousness of expression – there was that look of determination – so common over here.

July 17/1916 – Shorncliffe – Dibgate Camp

Cold – showers- fog in the morning. Physical drill – squad drill and stretcher drill in fore-noon. Clothes damp all morning in fact almost always damp. Equestrian and lecture in afternoon. I guess Sg. Major was mad about something. He put us through a hard pace for one hr.- weather close and sultry. Horses and men were ringing with perspiration when we finished. I had a very fretful horse. Moles was leading at one time and instead of keeping in school – he took bee line out across the park. Walked home after lecture.

July 18/1916 – Shorncliffe – Dibgate Camp

Drizzling and cold all morning – clear and warm in afternoon. Drills in morning. Lecture from Col. Scott at officers mess Moore’s Barracks in P.M. Use margarine instead of butter at mess – condensed milk. Have order to move camp to-morrow.

July 19/1916 – Shorncliffe – Cheriton Camp

Moved camp to-day to Cheriton – 3 miles. Much better grounds – on mainroad- 10 min walk from Folkestone. Very little system to moving- but boys worked hard and accomplished the entire moving by 6pm. Our new camp is a level glass flat with a nice parade ground – floors in all tents – not far from Caesar’s Mt. – not many trees. An orderly officer- had to stay at Dibgate until all camp moved. Lunch of crackers and cheese at canteen. Hot day.

July 20/1916 –Cheriton Camp

Drilled this am. Took first injection of Typhoid and Paratyphoid serum at noon. Will be excused duty for 2 days. Boys put through hard equestrian class to-day – doing circus stunts. Two were thrown – Givens sustained bruises and a comp. dislocation of finger (went to hospital and given anti-titanic serum. The other boy bruised. Got word to-night that we must move again as another battalion is coming in here. Anything is good enough for the C.A.M.C. They are the poorest looked after corps in the whole army. The red banded staff officers who are too much afraid to go to France and consequently know nothing of the work of the Drs. at the front – look upon us as a necessary evil and anything that is not needed for the combatants is given to us. I hope we do not have to move far. My arm is rather stiff to-night. Dr Fee is laid up (he had a shot yesterday) poor Capt. Rose is isolated in a tent at the end of lines (bugs) Capt. Cullen has had court martial going back to Canada.

July 21/1916- Cheriton Camp

Cold and foggy this am – bright and sultry in P.M. Feeling rather seedy from inoculation. Did no work in morning. Walked 2 miles to lecture in hot afternoon to be told there was no lecture. I feel like a school child but in reality we are more like what Capt. Moles says “D\_\_ fools” I do not think that Canadians were ever meant for soldiers. They are not used to authority and when a man covered with red ribbons and gold braid orders us around – we all feel like wishing we were in civilian life for a few minutes – but we are not. We had a very obnoxious officer around camp a while ago (he is gone now). One day he tried the patience of one of the Drs. He said “will you allow me to speak to you as man to man sir – for one minute” “yes” “well then you are the meanest blank blank son of a blank I ever met – that is as man to man”

July 22nd 1916 – Cheriton Camp

“War is H\_\_l”. That is a very common expression about camp. Had to move camp to-day. Convert a bunch of perfectly good captains into a fatigue party – put up our own tents and carry most of our own luggage. (we just moved to another part of the same camp). When all moved- a big fellow with gold braid and red band gave orders that we must return floors to former tents (for 11 C.M.R) and go without floors. We are living in some class. Blue streaks were flying around for some time – expressions which might even have led to court martial had they been heard. Some were on for trying to resign at once. Every move I make I have less left in my tent. All I have now is my bunk. Trunk and a packing box for a table. Eleven men to be sent to France soon. Fine day. I am feeling fine again. Poor Dr. Meek is in our camp now. He lost 68th. In drafts to France was reduced to Captain and sent here to take course. He has some nice things to say about war.

Some officers in Camp.

Col. Brusseau - 45 – CO of camp – big stout French Canadian. Good natured when not crossed – when crossed watch out.

Capt. Todd – 36 – Adjutant – was at front some time where he was gassed twice not entirely recovered. Very energetic little chap – would do anything for one and tries to make things as comfortable for us as possible.

Capt. Wood – 40 – T.S. – Stout-dark-easy going and good natured and comical. Has been to the front= does not think much of morality of Belgian women (has stories to back up his reason). Scares the devil out of his batman.

Capt. Cook – about 38 – T.S. from a Battalion – from Calgary. Wears hair clipped short – pleasant – all round good fellow says “war is hell”.

Capt. Moles – 42- T.S. – Brockville. Have worked with him for four months. A man’s man. Always in good humor – makes the best of conditions – has an excellent supply of unprintable stories – says what a fool he was to leave his home.

Capt. Hunt – T.S. – 35 – Here for months. A quick wiry dark man. Curses T.S and has been doing his best to get away to France. In charge of training. Makes conditions as comfortable as possible.

Capt. Penny father – 50 – Holland Manitoba. Short stout man – reddish complexion red mustache. Appears to have taken life easy and as comfortable as possible. Finds conditions in camp very trying and wishes he had some of the men, in private life just for ten minutes.

Capt. Rose – 45 – Calgary. Appears on his last legs from booze and dope. Physical wreck. Vermen much in guidance. Isolated and feels he is ostracised. Waiting for discharge.

Capt. Fee – 42 – Sharbutt Lake. Worked on farm until he was old and then went to university and farm ideas so strongly in his mind - that he is more farmer that doctor. Tall – false teeth – very set ideas – very self conscious – good living – reads his bible every night. Talks to everyone he meets from private to general. Has to have a cup of green tea before going to bed.

Capt. Ellis – 45 – Nova Scotia. Speaker in the house for that province. Very pleasant chap to talk to. Big dark man – has a smile for every one.

Lieut. Cal McLeod – 50 – Nova Scotia. C.O. of No. 9 hospital Stn. General big fellow – can have good time with him. Rank conservative.

Capt. Lawton – 40 – Saskatoon – A hot headed north England man. Good fellow to talk to if one does not cross him. Strong Tory supporter of Mel Hates Regina.

Capt. Houghton – 45 – Victoria B.C – Typical Englishman. My tent mate. Knows every thing about the militia – but gets bolled up in drill and thinks he is the only one that does it right. Stays out very late at night – has a lady friend in Folkestone whom he says is his “niece”

Capt. Graham – 32 – Luseland Sask. Big dark good looking chap. Very pessimistic – very much afraid of being sent to France.

Capt. McCallum – 26 – recent graduate of Varsity. Red hair – always full of devilment. Keeps life in the whole bunch.

Capt. Givens – 26- Recent graduate of Varsity. Very pleasant – always smiling – fatty. Fell off horse and dislocated one of his fingers.

Major Carruthers – 40- Nova Scotia. Very sarcastic little man – makes the most of his rank. Has had a son since arriving in England (his first son)

July 23/1916 – Cheriton (Sunday)

Morning wet cold – afternoon cloudy. Went to West Sandling in morning to see remnants of 77 Batt – They had moved to Bramshot. After dinner wrote letter and read. Went for a walk down town in evening.

July 24, 1916 Cheriton

Fine day. Drilled 3 hrs in fore noon. Dr. Meek took class- going through physical drill and form fours. Advised me to join R.A.M.C. Had excellent ride this afternoon. Went up on the cliffs. Up and down hills as steep as a barn roof- when we reached top our horses were lathered with sweat. Jumped ditches – through little groves. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Went downtown after lecture. Saw troop ships leaving for France – two nets are stretched across to France from here. Very little bombarding heard at front to-day. Got lost coming home. Fired my batman this morning – he got beyond me.

July 25/1916 Cheriton

Fine day – physical drill in a.m. Capt. Hunt (in charge of drilling) thoroughly “fed up on camp.” Has been here for months trying to get away. All the time forming fours etc. With a little persuasion from us decided that we had all the squad drill we needed. The sargent said he knew of a nice little secluded meadow where we could drill – 1/3 mile from camp. We were marched down and found the physical instructor ready with bats – balls – gloves +e. So we turned in and had a nice base ball game until noon. One of our men keeping look out for O.C. Equitation in P.M.

July 26/1916 Cheriton

Fine weather. Base ball again to-day. Went to Folkestone in p.m. after Equitation. Had dinner there and saw “Johnson and Willard” fight in moving pictures – met some men for camp at Station.

July 28/1916 Cheriton

Fine weather. Aeroplane dropped short distance from our lines last night. Engine trouble. Had a good lecture this morning on gas poisoning by an imperial who was through it. It must be a hellish form of warfare. Saw two real cowboys yesterday. They are getting ready for a big celebration here on Saturday. It was good to see the Mexican saddles – chaps – Stetson hats etc. again. It made me lonesome.

July 29/1916 - Cheriton

Fine day – dense fog in evening. About noon I noticed seven Br. Aeroplanes flying at a great rate and height over the camp (coming from the aerodrome which is just over the hill from here) At times they would disappear in the clouds. They were all heading in an easterly direction. I remember when I was a boy I used to throw a stone at the bee hive and watch the bees as they darted from their hive. That is the impression I had when I say the planes dart from their aerodrome over the hill and make for the enemy. I did not see the enemy in the air – but I saw the aeroplane in the after noon. It was a French machine manned by Germans (a captured machine) Our men brought it down. The closest I have been to war yet. In pm went to Cavalry sports at park. They are a good bunch of men and I thought what a shame they couldn’t get a chance at the uhlans. Tent pegging – sword work- wrestling on horse back – jumping etc. Had dinner down town. All evening aeroplanes flew over head. The machines had to light near here in fog.

July 30/1916 (Sunday) Cheriton 8pm.

Bright and warm. Orderly officer to-day. Air raid on south coast near hear (have not heard particulars). Dozens of aeroplanes have been circling over here all day. In over five hours now there hasn’t been a minute that I could not hear the hum which has now grown so familiar. I have just looked out of tent and counted six – most of them so high up that they could hardly be seen and all travelling very rapidly. During the raid we have been confined to camp all day. There may be some thing doing to-night. Zeppelin raid on east coast last night.

July 31/1916 – Cheriton – Monday

Very warm- fog in evening. Muster parade this morning when 40 Drs. lined up. Drs. coming and going every day. Capt. Moles moved to Ross Barracks as Jr. M.O. Capt. Penny farther to Buxton. Went to dentist in P.M. Very hot walk. Came back to camp and stayed in all evening reading. We have fun reading headings in Br. papers about Sir Sam – the Kitchener of the Dominion. Fighting Sam etc. I have heard other terms applied here which I never saw printed. There is feeling that there is air raid on.

Aug. 1/1916 Cheriton

Very hot. Went for ride the P.M not a dry hair on horst when I got in. Last night about 10 – orders came “all lights out and back to tents –Zeppelin raid on.” Lights were put out but most of us slipped out of our tents and watched. We heard firing to our south west but saw nothing. Report to-day says seven zeppelins were over this district last night. Seeing nothing I went to bed and asleep. Had a no of Regina Leaders to-day. Not much news in them but it is good to read them just the same. Dr. Meek always gets them from me when I am finished with them. Went down to bathing beach in after noon. Met Moles down town and had dinner at restaurant. Sat on Leas until dark – listening to band. Before the war Folkestone was one of the important summer resorts of England. It is pretty dead now.

Aug. 3/1916 – Cheriton

Hot day – bright. Last night another zepp raid. I was asleep in bed – about 1:30am – heard sentry calling “guards fall in”. Thinking it must be morning I turned over in my bunk. Very dark. Then I heard the distant “boom-boom”. Going to door of tent – I could see away to the north east the search lights from Dover piercing the clouds. Now playing about singly – now converging and using the double rays searching the heavens. Apparently they had found the zeppelin – but at this distance it was not visible. The shells could be seen bursting high up in the heavens – like little balls of fire. Occasionally a louder report could be heard (probably a bursting bomb). I felt as I watched as it I were seeing fire works from a long ways off – instead of watching a murderous form of warfare on unprotected women and children. After a few minutes the firing ceased and I went back to bed. It seemed rather uncanny to think of those great monsters hovering over us – unseen and unheard – ready to drop those death dealing bombs without any warning. The papers to-day reported no damage. We had an excellent ride to-day. It was supposed to be the last of our class – so the instructor said he was going to see what we could do. We were taken onto the parade grounds and made to go through some acrobatic stunts – one of them being the jumping of seven hurdles in succession. The instructors paid us the compliment of being the 2nd. best class he had had.

Aug. 4/1916 – Cheriton

Dull in am. Bright in P.M. Sir Sam Hughes inspected the troops of this district to-day. It too place at Moores Plains ( After Sir. J. Moore) In Sir Sam’s party were Gen. Steele – Gen. Alderson – Gen. McDougall and the members of parliament who are in Eng. There were 25 000 troops in the march past – representing every branch of the service. And a fine bunch of men – all sun burnt – strong healthy young fellows – most keen- confident faces. Each Battalion as it marched past seemed as good as the last. It made me proud of my country to look at them and to know what a sacrifice it was for some of them to be there and then to think that they represented only about 1/15 of Canadas soldiers. It was stupendous – grand – yet terrible to think that all those men – a whole city in this one group were here thousands of miles from their peaceful homes. Ready to fight and die if necessary just because one man is crazy and has such power that he can make his people believe he is gifted with divine right. Before the March past they were drawn up on the great plains. As they stood arms shouldered – every bayonet glistening – the whole plain bustled with shining points of steel. The band consisted of – eight bands combined – making between 200 and 300 in all. When the bugle sounded the march past began and for two hours they continued to pass – a company at a time. First came the Artillery – Cavalry – Infantry – CASC – transport and motor ambulances. After it was all over Sam called us all over (officers and gave us a talk. Said they proposed to send over a large no of men and station them in England – instead of keeping the in Canada. Sir Geo E. Foster gave us an excellent address.

We have been getting H\_\_l from all sides. This camp has had little or no discipline and no one seemed to care. Officers here did about as they pleased. Taking drill when they felt like it and stopping when they wanted to. The O.C. got after the adjutant and instructor and consequently they got after us. 1st. one then another lit into us and gave us a calling down with a distinct understanding that unless we all attended to business there would be things doing around camp. Eleven men have been picked for Salonika. Practically all young un married men. It is Hades there – with its heat and flies and sand and the resultant typhoid and dysentery. I think there is going to be doings down there soon.

Aug. 6/1916- Cheriton

Fine weather. This evening very cold. Reminds me of a night in fall in Canada. Cloudy - the search lights at Dover keep the clouds illuminated. Darting here and there an excellent night for raid. Two men left for Salonika to-night. One of them Smirle Lawson the great varsity footballer. Had some horse meat to eat to-night. A chap back from front had a tin of it with him – so we all had a taste. It tasted much like beef only with a sweetish taste. But I have often tasted worse potted meat. In fact had it not been for knowing what it was and some remarks that were passed (I found a piece of the bridle in mine – or a piece or the horses hoof or a hair out of its tail or a piece of the crupper) I would have enjoyed it. Went down and had a bath on the beach at Folkestone this am. Went in with Major Mitchel of Montreal. The water was rather cold at first but after I was in it for a while I enjoyed it. Besides the scenery in the water excellent – the bathing suits worn by the fair swimmers being very scanty. Each trying to see if she could go one better that the other in this respect the prize was easily carried off by a very stout lady of 40 – who wore a pair of tights five sizes too small for her (especially in places). After I had a good rub down and a scotch and soda to warm me up I felt fine. After dinner Moles and I went for a walk. We took notice of the large number of poorly developed boys and girls – a great many showing the evidence of rickets – a disease not common in Canada – except in large cities and the result of improper feeding when babies. Had dinner down town. Saw a large number or troops leaving for France and after boat loads of wounded returning. Some of them arrive here within 24 hours of receiving wounds. We counted 45 boats at one time – off-shore. All after noon two silver guns plied back and forward watching for submarines. As soon as troop boats leave harbour they put on all the speed possible in crossing. Have got work that our camp is to be moved to Bramshott. Met Dr. Harvey and Mr. Fletcher of Regina.

Aug. 9/1916 – Cheriton 12pm

It is hard to describe my feelings to-night. I came over to England prepared for anything that might occur and hoping against hope that I would be sent to France. There are so many Drs. (hundreds of them) who have never got across to France that I had commenced to despair – more especially when I saw young men of my own are who had been here for months who could not get out of England. And yet when the word came at 8pm to-day “Report at Folkestone Pier at 9am to-morrow to proceed to France” it took me unaware – but of the 40 Drs. who came over with me I was the 1st. they called to France. One of the 1st. things I remember was one of the other fellows shaking my hand and saying “Congratulations old boy – you are a lucky Devil” – I wish I were going with you” It is the same vague message “to somewhere in France”. I have no idea where – all I know is we sail from Folkestone and land at Boulogne. The superior authorities tell us nothing more that they absolutely must. When we arrive at Boulogne we will be given further instructions. Just three of us go. Capt. McNeil (who has been here two months). Capt. Ireland and I. I saw Capt. Moles to-night and when I told him he said God Bless you old boy – if you see any opening for me over there be sure to put in a word. I wired Eleanor and wrote Charlie and have spent all evening packing things up. I hope my next entry will be made in France.

Aug.9 – Boulogne France – Louvre Hotel

France

At last I am in old France. I have often wondered if I would ever get here. Left camp at 8:15 am took taxi to Folkestone pier and embarked on a two funnel transport. There were a number of officers and a couple of regiments of Australians – all as happy as larks. They are probably up at the front by this time. We left the pier at 9:30 and headed towards Dover to get in side the nets. We went at full speed – dense clouds of black smoke coming from funnels all the way across. We were followed by another troop ship and convoyed by a destroyer of the latest type. Once we got inside the nets we sailed straight for Boulogne. Met two hospital sips with the large red cross painted very plainly on side and funnels. The rest of boat white. There could be no possibility of a German submarine mistaking her for any other kind of a boat. About 3 miles out we were met by a French submarine and taken in to port. It was rather foggy and we could not see land until we were almost at it. We sailed quietly in and practically no notice was taken of us. There are so many troops land at Boulogne that it is part of the days work. At the end of the pier were two machine guns – pointing out over the harbour. On the pier were large numbers of torpedoes – piled up like cord wood. On the pier many more soldiers in Khaki than in the light blue uniform of the French soldier. The French soldier is as a rule shorter that the British – most of them seem excitable.

Boulogne is an old seaport of about 30 000 – extending from the harbour up the side of a hill. A little river (The Anne or some name like that) flows through the city. It stinks of fish – and a fish market near the bridge can be smelt a long ways off. The streets are narrow – winding and paved with cobble stones. A sandy beach – fronted by hotels extends beyond the harbour. The street cars are narrow gage more like Canadian cars that the British are – but much smaller than ours. The Railroad engines are much larger that the English but smaller than ours and having the water tanks along the side of the engine. The cares are more like ours in size. French meals are much more like Canadian that the Br. are and cars turn to Rt. In meeting. Taking it all round conditions here approach more nearly to those in Canada than those in Br. do.

Visited ADMS. And he told us to report to no iii hospital just outside the city (McGill). We did so but they were full up – so we returned to Boulogne and took rooms at “Louvre Hotel” no iii hospital is in buildings and tents. Buildings being an old Jesuite College. The operating room was used as a horse stable before the war. Accommodation is 2200 beds. (There is accommodation in hospitals around Boulogne for 10 000.) I watched the convoys bringing in wounded from the front to-night. There was a string of 45 motor ambulances came to the station. We went for a walk on the beach after dinner.

Aug. 11/1916 Boulogne France

Rather dull day. Went for a walk through the narrow streets. Stores all small – a great many old antique places and jewelry stores. A smell of fish in places a “rotten” smell permeates the air in all the lower town. The fish-hockers – for the most part old women – are every where to be seen around the quay – fighting among themselves. Each carries a big basket with fish that their men have brought in. Some of the fish still wiggling in the basket. They wear white hoods (at least that was their original color) – a black waist coast arrangement – skirts that reach half way between knee and boots and low shoes (some of them wooden). The fisherman – hard looking old chaps – hang about the quay in the afternoons – dressed in their brown duck suits and smoking their foul tobacco in clay pipes. A continuous string of soldiers are on the move – passing my hotel to the station close by where they entrain for the front. First a regiment of Australians – British – Canadians from the boats. Then French from somewhere else and the trains returning bring their loads of wounded who are taken to the hospitals as soon as possible skirt across in the hospital ships to England. I was sitting in my window before lunch and saw Col. Street and Mayor Bowie (Ottawa 77th) passing. They had just come from Eng. Went down to meet them and had glass of beer with them. There were 3 other Col. with them and they got betting which would be killed 1st. – Cheerful. We have a very amusing time trying to make the French understand. I have few words of French that I learnt at school and in Montreal. I said a few words to our waitress at table last night – but she could understand my English better that my Fr. Asked chambermaid for my kimono last night and she brought me a “commode”. Was at hospital train when a convoy of wounded soldiers came in. Most of them had shrapnel and machine gun bullet wounds. The system of unloading and loading into ambulances is every efficient. The men are all labeled with a card tied around the neck – giving name- reg. – injury - etc. This is done at the clearing station and the stretcher bearers take the patient to the required ambulance. One of the men told me that in 4 days the 1st. week of July 32000 men passed through the station to hospitals and hospital ships here.

July 13th 1916 9am La Havre

Le Grande Hotel

I arrived in Le Havre at 8 am. and have had my breakfast – a very miserable affair but better that nothing. My 1st. meal since breakfast yesterday. Got orders from A.D.M.S. At Boulogne to report at La Havre “A.D.M.S” Left Boulogne yesterday at 2pm on fast express-? 18 hours to cover 140 miles. We did not exceed 20 miles per hr. at any time and generally about 6 or 7 miles. It was a bright day when we left our hotel and was then taken in an ambulance to the other station. Went south along the coast for some distance through sunny France. All along the railroad guards were stationed – some of the had little frame sentinel houses – but most of them were made of straw. Along the sides of the railroad are patches of garden – cabbage – onions etc. The harvests which consist chiefly of rye – wheat and oats is ripe and the peasants were cutting it with cradles – scythes and sickles – principally women and old men. Once I saw an old reaper “Frost and wood” and in one field far back from the railroad I saw an old binder with some of the reels gone. The fields seem well cultured and crops good. Differing from England in the lack of roses (one Frenchman said “we plant cabbage where the Englishman has roses”) no trim hedges and very few fences of any kind even along the roads. Trees “willow – poplar etc.” – grow through the fields and along the track several goats were tethered – nibbling the grass. Every one seems happy and if it were not for the lack of young men and the large no of women wearing black one would not know that France was at war. We passed large cavalry depots Eng. – Can. – and Indian around Le Teps. Number of apple orchards. Country full of Eng. Infantry camps. Passed through Le Treport (Where Queens Hospital is) about 5 or 6 pm and at 8:05 arrived at Aboncourt where we changed trains for Rouen. Met a young Fr. Army Dr. on this train who came ahead to Le Havre with us. Arrived at Rouen at 1am and find that our train leaves for Le Havre at 4 am. Walk across city to other station (1 ½ miles) and sleep on floor of parlour in hotel for which privilege we tip porter a couple of Francs. Get a little tepid coffee with no milk but unable to get any bread. During the might we met a large number of troops on way north. Between Rouen and Havre met a train of Vancouver boys – part of the 4th. Division which are being moved over from Bramshott to France by way of Southampton. I got not sleep last night at all and feel rather tough. Have not seen much of Havre and was so sleepy when passing through Rouen that I took little notice of it.

9pm – Harfleur Camp Hospital.

It has been a lovely day. Ambulance came to the station for us and took us up to the hospital and from there to the Drs. home. No. 7 Stationary Hosp. is from Dalhousie College N.S. and has been in France about two months. It consists of two parts – 1st in Hotel Des Emigrants in Havre consisting of about 300 beds and the tent hospital situated at Harfleur about 5 miles from Havre and consisting of 500 beds. Col. Stewart is a man of about 60 yrs with white hair and mustache and kind eyes. He knows and cares nothing for military regulations and seems more like a father among his sons than a O.C among his junior officers. After we arrived I had a shave and a good bath and a very enjoyable dinner. Went down to the station for luggage but it had not arrived. Able to get no satisfaction from the officials other than “it will likely be along in 3 or 4 days”. Went out to the tent hospital in time for afternoon tea. It is situated on the southern slope of one of the most beautiful valleys. Out huts are situated close up to a grove which extends along the slope. In front of our huts is a beautiful lawn and flower garden and lawn tennis prepared by soldiers. Below this are the hospital wards (ten long tents of 50 patient beds each. To the north west of us is the Canadian Base – where they keep a reserve of 5 000 or 6 000 men for reinforcing at front. And down in the other direction is the Eng. Base. Across in the opposite slope of the valley are forests and fields of grain and dwellings. In the lower part of the valley a little stream winds in among the groves (which were planted many years ago). There also are the roads – Trolley line and Railroad to Havre. We eat at the base mess. Our huts are square – built of canvas over a framework. They are about 12 feet by 7 feet good floor – two good beds with real feather pillows and white sheets and a table 6 feet long.

Aug. 14th/1916 Harfleur Hospital

Fine day. Have been allotted ward 7 and 5 – about 100 cases – some of them from the front – some base men. Spent fore noon going over cases and afternoon our luggage arrived. I went to town in ambulance – had dinner at hospital mess in city and had walk over the city with Capt. Ireland. It is a fine old city. The streets are much wider and cleaner that in Boulogne. One system of sewage that struck me as unsanitary is that the water from the wash rooms etc. of the houses passes out on to the street and runs along the side of the pavement to a drain. Heard that 73 Batt. (Earl Cumming Batt) was in Havre but did not see them. Arrived home about 10:30 – came out on the last car. Had hard time finding camp.

Aug. 15th./1916 – Harfleur Hospital

Fine day – a couple of showers. Spent most of the day in wards. Had game of tennis this evening. Our mess is excellent. Our menu for dinner to-night was

1. Soup – vegetable
2. Fish – salmon
3. Macaroni and cheese
4. Roast beef with potatoes and cauliflower
5. Pudding
6. Fruit – pears and grapes nuts
7. Coffee – cheese etc.

Aug. 16/1916 – Harfleur

Fine warm day. Spent forenoon in my wards. Did 3 operations in afternoon – removing shrapnel. One chap – a Fr. Canadian – showed great grit. He had a piece of shrapnel embedden in his cheek. Removed it from the inside of the mouth. He stood more that I could ever stand. And they all take every think cheerfully. Not a particle of trouble in the wards. Those that are able to be up play cards and read and another game with cards. Some play solitaire. They are all friendly among themselves. A British Tommy told me to-day that they liked to get into a Canadian hospital as there was much less military restrictions and more freedom among men and doctors. I took a walk up over the hill this evening through one of the grandest forests. The trees appear to have been planted years ago. They are about 1 ½ ft planted about 10 to 15 feet apart and all as straight as a ruler. The ground is as clean as a lawn. My old batman is a great old boy. Nothing is too much bother for him and he has an old face like a comedian (Mr. Auld). He has four sons fighting and he said as he was an old soldier he tried to join – was turned down three times on account of age – when he eventually got on to the hospital unit.

Aug. 19/1916 – Harfleur – Le Havre

It has been excellent weather the last three days. I have not been away from camp. Spending mornings and part of afternoons in my wards. One meets with some peculiar cases in the wards. One of the most common and yet the hardest to feel certain about is the “faking” game. We must use great care in these cases – for we all wish to be fair to the tommies – and to ourselves. But on the other hand we can not allow a man – who is perfectly able to “carry on” – to lie in a bed in the hospital which is required for a deserving case. I had an old Russian in the hospital who complained of appendicitis and was bound he would have an operation. He had no temp. and ate like a horse. He complained of a great pain over appendix and I could scarcely touch it without him wincing. But when I got his attention drawn to something else – I was able to sink my fingers right in over this area. He went back to “full duty”. One Canadian from the Ypres salient told me yesterday that is was worse than “Hell” up there. They have been held right in their trenches while the Germans pounded away at them in their exposed position. They begged to be allowed to change- to drive the Germans back at any cost – better than inaction. But always they got the same reply “just hold your trenches and do not advance.”

Above us on the hill is the training grounds for the Can. Br. and Australian Bases. It is here that the men get their last instruction and it is wonderful to watch. Everything is as it is at the front and the men do absolutely the same work (except killing Germans) and there are a large number of casualties come down from there to the hospital. There too is the German prison camp- through which the german prisoners pass. There is certainly going to be something doing on the Canadian Front shortly – judging from rumors and conditions around here. Felt a little seedy yesterday but am better to-day. A rumour is afloat that I am going “up the line” shortly.

Aug. 23rd/1916 – Hafleur Hospital

Evening – has been a pleasant day – have had no rain since arriving in France. Spent Sunday in camp writing letters. In evening Dr. McLennon and I went to Havre and had dinner. Had hard time catching car- missed the last car back and had to get a taxi home. Monday afternoon McNeil and I went in and wandered over the city all after noon had dinner in the city and arrived home about 9pm. Havre is a large city – some of the streets are fairly wide. Sewage system is poor. Harbour runs up into city. Hotels all open on to beer gardens – with their green plants and little round tables. Where this is impossible the tables are placed right on pavement. The Fr. All drink wine and light Fr. Beer – even the children. Every one has a bottle of wine with their meals. On Tuesday did not leave camp to-day. Sir Sam was at the base today and I was on duty officer – in camp all day. Gave a lecture to the Red Cross men on anatomy. To-day my batman and the old comedian head batman (he has a son in this unit) went down to Havre. I gave my man two pounds to change. They so far forgot themselves that they had a little joy on my money – but I have paid a similar amt. before to see a show I did not enjoy so much as the performance the old lad put up when he got back to camp.

Some of the men in my wards now are “slinging the lead” and I shall have to make a cleaning out.

Sunday – Aug. 27th. /1916 – Harfleur – No 7.

Have had fine weather all week. To-day we have had two or three heavy showers and a little thunder- the 1st I have heard since coming over from Canada – Thunder storms are very rare here and when they do occur they are very mild compared with Canada. Wash day in the base – the men all have their shirts and drawers hanging out of the barbed wire fence. There was a concert at the base this P.M. as the O.C. said “the youth and beauty and latest styles of old Normandy attended”. A man was court martialed during the week for living with his wife. If he had been with any other woman than his wife it would have been all right. But it was a against military law for her to be living in his district. Have met a number of officers from the west at the mess. On Thursday I saw a threshing outfit at work in a field near here so I went over to see it work. It was a very tiny square machine – not much larger than one of our farming mills (of course this is wrong but that is what it looked to me). It took them 2 1/2 days to thresh about six acres of wheat. The crew consisted of 13 men and 3 women. No forks were used the sheaves being pitched by hand from a stack. The engine was a tiny affair with an upright boiler and very long narrow smoke stack and was arranged with a pair of shafts to be drawn about by one horse. The separator was almost square- the sheaves being fed in from the top of the machine. The grain came out at the side of the machine and was put into sacks “two bushels to a sack”. The straw passes back and sassed into an arrangement almost identical with the knotters or our binders where it was tied into bundles and carefully stacked behind the machine – the latter work being done by women. No one hurt himself working and every little while a belt would fly off and they would all gather round to fix it. The wheat is plumber than ours – of a poorer grade and color and makes much inferior and darker flour. I saw a regiment of soldiers coming in from the training grounds. There were at least twenty different songs going on – every little section singing one of the latest songs from the London theatres. Every day drafts pass off to the front. One day the mess will be full of officers – the next almost empty – ask any one where they have gone – “up the line”. Then there will be new faces present +c – always moving up through the base to the front and back by the hospital route to Blighty.

Aug. 29th/1916 Harfleur

Rainy all day – cold dreary and windy reminding me of our fall rains in the west. I was awaken by part of the roof blowing off my hut. The rain began to come in on to me in bed. I got it fixed up and piled stones on top to keep it down but it lifted stones and all off. One of my hospital tents had 3” of water in it. The legs of the beds sinking down in the mud – but the beds themselves were dry. The wind whistled through among the beds and patients who were not too sick sat huddled up in bed – very uncomfortable looking. At noon the dining room patients lined up in the mud and rain to await their rations at the cook tent. The bridge across the flat to our mess was under water. I went around all day with my rain coat and sweater on. My sweater coat is the most comfortable piece of clothing I have brought with me. In the P.M I went to Havre to buy a pair of long rubbers. I spent so long buying a little sweater and pants for Douglas that it was too late when I got to the ordinance stores.

Aug. 31st/1916

It has cleared up – weather is now bright. Orderly officer to-day. Gave men squad drill in P.M. Being the last of the month the reports all had to be made out. Attended boxing match where I saw a little Canadian knock the tar out of a big Englishman and two little bantams giving an exhibition of step-dancing. When I arrived home at 9 P.M. my old batman made me a good lunch of boiled eggs – toast and cocoa.

Sept. 1st/1916 Harfleur

Received a big bunch of papers from Eleanor. This after noon McLellan and I went up to the training grounds of Can. and Br. base. We went up through a beautiful forest of beech trees. The Canadians (for no one else does these things) yielded to the temptations of the nice smooth green bark of the big trees. Some had their initials alone – some their full names and addresses and some had cut the two hearts with their initials in one and other initials in the other. I supposed of their girls at home. The training camp consists of hundreds of acres – fixed up identical with the conditions of the front. Here thousands of men were drilling. There was no squad drill and no marching. First was the bayonet fighting – men charge – in trenches bayoneting bags set in them and bags hung from poles. There was the charges through barbed wire entanglements over obstacles – jumping trenches and eventually firing a volley. Then over in another section were the men at real bayonet fighting. Each one wore a mask and chest protection and was provided with a dummy gun with a spring bayonet. This bayonet had on its end a small knob and when this comes in contact with the body of the opponent the bayonet passes back in to the barrel of the gun. The men were lined up in two rows facing each other. They were taken in twos and made to charge and use all the force they would in a real charge and it was no childs play. While we watched there were a number of casualties. The sargent in charge put the men at one another and encouraged them to do their best to get the other fellow. If one on the men “shirked” he used his big stick on him and called out to him to use his fork. “We shall see if there are any lady-men in the bunch”. Use your feet on the blank-blank”. Don’t be afraid of hurting him. I will tell you when he is hurt”- “use the but of your gun on his blank head” etc. Here some were digging trenches. Over in one corner of the training camp is the German prison – we saw a number of these fellows – mostly well built fellows and healthy. I noticed some of the refuse coming from their camp and thought that many of our lads would be glad of some of the good bread and cheese they were wasting. When I got back to camp I found in my table a piece of “MacDonalds Chewing” some one had received a box from home and had divided up.

Sept. 7th/1916 – Harfleur (Wed)

Having pleasant weather. On Monday had a heavy rain. Went to Le Havre on Sat. afternoon. To ordinance stores- bought a pair of long boots (rubber) for 18s. for which we would pay at least $7 or $8 in Canada. Six pairs of socks @ 1s 4d. – worth anything in Canada at 75 cents. They sell whole sale to officers. McNeil bought a British warm for 10 s. I paid $33 for mine in Canada. Had a concert at the base last night – put on by Lena Ashford and her troupe from London – in the YMCA building. It was as good as one would see in London Theatre with the exception that on our little stage the only fixture was an old piano – a rough camp table and three camp chairs. On the wall at the rear of the little stage were two pictures – one a C.P.R. scene in Western Canada and another C.P.R. scene of B.C. The girls for the most part wore their dresses and the plays lacked anything vulgar. The manner of the actors and actresses was that of amateurs putting on a little play in their little hometown – one felt that they were one your selves over here working for their country – and that is really what they are. They put on their little plays – comedy of course – in all the bases and right up to the front – often under very trying circumstances. Two girls came on to sing a song and the boys kept calling them back until they had sung six pieces – all from the plays now going on in London – the same songs the boys sing marching in from the T.G. – the soldiers coming in in the chorus. And they did it in such a friendly way that one felt they were enjoying it as much as we were. For foot lights we had a large number of candles stuck onto a board at the front of the stage. They put on two performances to about 5 000 Can. Soldiers and every one of them felt happier afterwards we had a big dinner afterwards in the mess room – which broke up about 10:45. In censoring letters to-day (we often do this to help out the parson) I came across one from one of the R.A.M.C Red Cross men – who has been up the line with the British Drs and with about 40 others of his men was sent here for instructional work. It conveys the feeling of most of these men who come to our hospital after being in a British hospital as there is nothing personal in the extract- I could not help making a copy of it \_\_\_\_

The Canadians who are in charge are the best fellows in the world. They have a sublime contempt for the unnecessary red tape and useless conventional tomfoolery. Their only concern is to carry out the work allotted to them with thoroughness and dispatch. You can sing – whistle smoke if you wish on duty – but the work must be done and done well. And when you’ve finished you are finished and you are not sent on some foolish fatigue such as walking around the camp picking up matches as a reward for your energy. Further their officers are delightful men – straight forward – breezy – straight talking – straight dealing gentlemen. They expect you to say what you think not merely say “yes yes” to all they say. I would be glad to be as good as a Canadian – JC Buckley

(END OF BOOK ONE)

Sept. 15/1916

“On train going to front” I have often wondered if this time would ever come and how I would feel. I do not feel nervous – I feel curious more that nervous. I feel sorry for Eleanor. I know she will worry about me but I took all these things into consideration before I enlisted and know I am doing right. I was in my ward (Sept. 13) in the after noon removing a piece of shrapnel from a soldiers elbow – when Capt. McNeill came in and said – “Come on boy you and I have to leave for the front as soon as we can get our bags packed. I said “you’re joking man”- “No I’m not” – and I knew by the keen look on his face that he wasn’t. You go to Battalion at \_\_\_\_\_\_ and I go to \_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. There was some hasty packing of kit bags and with in 2 hours we reported at the A.D.M.S. office at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Our papers were not ready for us and we were told we could not leave before the next night – so we went back to our hospital and did our work. The next morning we got our moving orders – it was merely – “Report to R. T. 6 at 10pm – I asked him where we were going – “you shall report to R.T.6 when you arrive at \_\_\_\_\_” That was all I could get out of him. We had a nice 1st. class coach – six in a compartment and although there was no chance to lie down – we had a fairly comfortable night – arriving at 7 am. The trip was exceedingly slow. I slept for about 2 hours ate our lunch and reported to R.T.6 and got the same vague directions. “Report on no TU track at 3pm.” The entrainment officer will do the rest”. We did so our compartment was marked for us – we got in and even yet have no idea where we are going. We had some time to walk about the city. It is a pretty city – with its cobble stone streets – its open cafes. The stores are up to date and as in other Fr cities jewelry stores predominating. We visited the market place about 8 am and watched the old Fr women disposing of their produce – all kinds of beautiful vegetables. The women all looked very cheerful perched up on their loads of potatoes and cabbage – beets – carrots. Almost all were the same – two wheeled carts drawn by a tiny donkey and a dog. The dogs – mostly large – black – long haired animals do their share of work here. We sat in a park overlooking the river \_\_\_\_ and watched the little tugs ply back and forward hauling strings of pretty painted blunt nosed barges on which whole families live and work. We sat there for over an hour watching an old man fishing and in all that time the he managed to catch one little fish about 3” long. We came back again in the after noon and he was still there. We looked in the hole in a rock where he put the fish and he had succeeded in adding one more little fish – if anything smaller than the last. I do not know what the next few days will bring but I shall try to do what work is given me and if I should at any time be called upon to tend to a wounded German I shall try to do as much for him as I would for one of our own soldiers.

3am – Sept. 16/1916 – Front

Have been here 5 hrs. I am some miles behind firing line. Had a good night on train. Making our meals on sea biscuit – bully beef and jam. Just two of us in the compartment. The Railroad. Arrived at a station – I do not even know if it has a name and an officer came along and said “All Canadians out here” We were lined up and marched about 4 miles – to a little camp where we had a wash – our first in 2 days - a shave and a dinner. The bread was rather sour and the butter not the best but my appetite was equal to any thing. Far away we can hear the guns and see the Br observation balloons hovering over our lines. Br. aeroplanes circle around continuously. Have not yet seen an enemy machine. There is report of big doings last night – my regiment is in the trenches and did wonders last night. I feel anxious to get up now – Capt. McNeill is still with me. Hundreds of transports have passed here in the last hr.

Sept. 17/1916 1pm.

Beautiful day – farmers in this area all busy at harvest which is late here. They pay no attention to the war just a few miles away. Watched the bombardment last night. It put me in mind of the flashes of sheet lightning after a hot day at home. The cannons could be heard but faintly. Occasionally a red flare would go up. I slept on the ground in my sleeping bag – making a hole in the earth for my hip to fit into. This morning an enemy plane appeared over head. It was flying very high. Immediately the anti-air craft guns started their work – the shells burst all around the machine – appearing as round balls of white smoke – where they hung. I counted twenty one of these balls and the aeroplane appeared to be in the centre of them. Then our machines were seen circling in great circles – climbing up to it but before they reached it – the enemy had disappeared in the clouds. Capt. McNeill left me this morning had to march to a place 6 miles farther on. I have received no word yet.

Sept. 18/1916

Rain all day – tent very wet. Went over ½ mile to a farm house and bought a sheaf of straw for 50 c. to put my sleeping bag on.

Sept. 19/1916

9:30pm. – drizzling rain outside – am in dressing station. Mud every where over the ankles – cold. Came up in ambulance. All the way it was a steady stream of ambulances – trucks- infantry – artillery – some coming and some going. Every one earnest but cheerful and on every side one could hear singing and laughing. Surely Tommy is a wonderful fellow. Here I saw a bunch of German prisoners – mostly young fellows – not more than 17. I made the journey with Lieut. Keyes of 3rd pioneers. He has a son in the trenches. Every where was bustle – Br aeroplanes sailing all over – Captive balloons all along the front - appearing as great white worms up in the clouds. When we arrived at \_\_\_\_\_\_ we could see the result of bombardment. Houses in ruins – a church all shattered – no one but soldiers. All around me our great guns crashed – and occasionally the peculiar whamy of the German shells sped through the air. The Drs and red cross men are excellent – go about their work as though they were back in peaceful old Canada. Had dinner in the open with a piece of canvas over our heads – overcoat on and mud up to the ankles. But it tasted good – roast beef – sour bread and jam. I stood out in the rain after dark and watched the scene. A dazzling flash of light and then the roar which seemed to shake the earth. All night long they kept it up – I tried to count the reports but they were so fast that I could not. I tried to sleep but would just get dozing off when “bang” my bed would shake under me. However I got a fairly good nights rest.

Sept. 20/1916

I am sitting in what was once a German dug out – it is up in the lines 25 feet under ground. It consists of 5 rooms – floored (100 men) steel ceiling – board walls – white washed and doors – connecting the rooms. It is wired for electric lighting and push buttons at hand. Table in the centre of one room with bunks around. In another a stove for cooking. Fitted up like a city residence. I put on my steel helmet and took my gas mask with me this am when I started for this dressing station. We had not gone far when we heard the “whizz – bang” and the earth flew up about 150 yds away. I do not feel even nervous. Not as much as I did when I was leaving Eng. for France. Casualties are coming in – mostly minor cases. I shall say nothing of the fatalities in this. One man was brought in with his rt leg fractured above the knee – Rt arm fractured and a bullet through Rt shoulder – and never a whimper out of him.

Sept. 21/1916

Went over last night to Regimental aid post – shells were flying pretty fiercely especially shrapnel + H.E and a few whizz bangs. Saw Ralph Connor in a dug out. Another parson dispersed coffee and oxo in his little dug out. Stretcher bearers had hard time in mud and shell holes. One could not recognize them for mud. Visited Capt. Selby and Ross – building dam to keep water out of dug out. Chamber of H. – Picked up few souvenirs. Villages nothing left. Not even whole bricks. Heavy shell fire this pm 8” H.E. – Fr artillery officer with his 75 story.

Sept. 22/1016 –Dug out

Heavy artillery fire during the night for both sides. Considerable no. of casualties though. One of our sergeants and 13 men had a close shave but all returned. Traffic blocked and we had to take all cases in to dressing station for 2 hrs. – had about 25 cases. Visited the chamber of H. this am. and what was once the town of \_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_. There is absolutely nothing left. Not even a whole brick. In one place the cellar of a house – built with arched brick ceiling still remained. It was no doubt at one time an underground vault. Part of an old Deering binder was still visible. The sights along the trenches are frightful and blow flies in millions – swarm the parapet. Examined the crater of a mine – about 150 ft across and 50 feet deep.

Sept. 23/1916 Warloy

Reported to H.Q 8pm. – orders from ADMS to report to 49th. Batt. Edmonton. Hard time finding their H.Q. I roamed around through town (a) for over hr. – eventually located them in an old Chateau. Up this am at 5:30 – Inspected billets and started on route march at 7:30. I have a little western (chestnut) horse – rather frightened of transports. Met Garnock of P.P.C.L.I. Pleasant march to Warloy – arrived 11 am. (6 or 8 miles) – In Billet with H.Q in an old public house. Spent PM in looking after med work – bright and warm day. Met Windy. P.P.C.L.I.

Sept. 24/1916 – Val De Maison

Up at 5 am. – fine day – foggy in am. Hot in pm. On the road at 7:15 am - arrived 12 noon – (12 miles) – no. of men dropped out- met Renton on his way to front. Fine trip. Gen Truppett of this brigade gave us talk when we arrived. He said that we were one of the best reg. in the war.

Sept. 25, 1916 – Montrelet

Bright warm day – route march started at 7:45 – arrived at 11:30. Little village on a clear stream surrounded by forests. Houses all old – rough cast. Have comfortable billet – with nice feather bed. The old Fr. Lady is the wife of a Fr. Dr. who is at the front. She has one son a Dr. and one a dentist. Both at the front. Is very cheerful and gives us her best. Has a no of pet rabbits and ginnea pigs. Met a no. of Br. regiments on march. Rooming with Lt. Hudson.

Sept. 26/ 1916 – Montrelet

Spent day resting in this town. Interview with Gen. McDonald. Tended a woman in Bonneville – (mastoid).

Sept. 27/1916 – Vadencourt Wood

Up at 5 am. – left at 7 am. – Made 15 miles passing through Val De Maison – Herissant and Contary . Camped in beautiful forest. We can again hear the bombardment.

Sept. 28/1916 – Albert

Rained during night. Roads very muddy. Marched to Albert in am. (up at 5 am.) It was a pretty scene to see all the camp fires among the trees as the men cooked their meals in the dark forest. Stopped for 2 hrs. in brick fields. Lunch from YMCA. Went to billets in Albert. Mine is in a beautiful old house near railway arch. Little garden with summer house at back. Troops in readiness for call up line.

Sept. 29/1916 – Albert

Bright day. Very heavy bombardment. Large no. of shells dropped in Albert.

(Drawing of Bldg.) Gave lecture to my red cross men. Wandered all over city looking for a collar button – could not find one. Quite a no. of women still in city – mostly running little Estaminal and lunch places. Some of them in buildings partly in ruins. Visited the old church – it is in bad shape but the Virgin statue still remains on top of tower. Most of houses are ruined in some way.

Sept. 30/1916

Fine day. Went into a hardware store. The roof is gone and most of front blown out. Lost a no. of our men out on working party. Went up line with my batman in P.M. to locate my next aid post. Heavy bombardment while we were out. Had a real bath in a real bath tub which we found in an old house. It felt good.

Oct. 1/1916 – Albert

Dull day. Has rained every day for over a week. Came out of trenches last night about 12pm.

Oct. 2nd/1816

Left in heavy rain on 10 mile march to trenches. Roads rotten. Waited three hrs. on road side in rain. Met H. Wells on way in. Mud to knees in places. Fell into a couple of shell holes on way in. Arrived at aid post covered with mud and very tired. Dressing station a dirty muddy little hole – dug out about 20 ft. deep. – long narrow passage – top about 6” too low. Very poor accommodation. Had Capt. Smith – P.P.C.L.I. M.O with me. We took turns 6 hrs. each. Took 1st shift 8 – 2am. Red Cross men had terrible time carrying stretchers in. Kept most of cases until day light before sending out. Westgett made a little lunch and some cocoa in a little a canned heat stove. Very crowded. Tried to get some rest at 2 am – curled up on wet ground – but was too cold and wet so had to get up. Had can of pork and beans for breakfast and went on duty at 8 am. Still raining – stretcher bearers brought in no. of wounded – one man had been in shell hole for 4 days (got food and water from dead Germans) – numbers who had been in for one or two days. Every case covered with mud. Bombardment in P.M. – the air seems to be alive with shells. One shell exploded few yards from dressing station and a piece hit about 2 feet from my leg. Windy brought in PM. not badly wounded. Had no sleep during the night. Made a bed out of 2 petrol cans but no use. On 4th busy day – one man died in dressing station while dressing his wounds. Fritz shelled the D.S with H.E. in PM. One shell hit 15 ft. away – every one made record time in getting to shelter. St. bearers did wonderful work. Ran out of grub and had to eat a tin of bully beef for supper and no bread. Relieved during night by Imp. Had a terrible trip out – mud – mud. I led my little party. Tea at kitchen. Ride with mule – home – sleep.

Oct. 10/1916 – Albert

Bright warm day. Came out from trenches last night. On Oct. 7 we went in west of Courcelette. Saw Stafford on my way up. He was with a field ambulance. Took over from 43rd. Dr Buck – M.O. of P.P.C.L.I. and I in one dressing stn. I lay down for 1st pt of night – went on duty at 3am. Considerable no. of wounded coming through at 5 am. Every gun opened fire – including machine guns nearby. The noise was deafening – the whole earth shook. Tongues of tire shot out all over the land – impossible to hear any one gun. The front was a continuous blaze of bursting shells of all kinds and sizes. Flares all along the line. A grand spectacle. This kept up for a while – then quietness – we knew things were doing. Out boys gained their trenches but had to give most of them up. Shortly after this our wounded started to come in. Some walking and some on stretchers. We had a very busy day. In the evening we got word that a no. of our wounded were still in our shell holes. Sent back to transport at Albert and got 64 men with stretchers. I went out with one bunch and had my first experience of being deliberately sniped at with both rifles and whizz bangs. Spent half an hr. in shell hole and eventually got to front line trenches. It was the first time I had been compelled to crawl on my belly like a worm. It is peculiar how humiliated one feels. The 1st. time – I stood up and decided I wouldn’t let any men see me hiding in a shell hole - when a whizz bang lit uncomfortably close by. I ducked into the nearest shell hole and for a while it seemed very shallow. Eventually we got to trench. All the time those damned German flares were going up giving Fritz a chance to secure. We got in to a trench where we found 4 wounded. Once when the whizz bangs came very thick we all ducked to shell holes. After things quietened down I got out and tried to find my men. I went in to one hole and saw a man. In the darkness I caught hold of him but he was cold and stiff. Coming back we had a hard time but eventually arrived at aid post. The dressing station was full the road in front was full of stretchers. Some with arms gone – some mortally wounded. The next day we cleaned the wounded up pretty well. There were apparently a new bunch of Germans from the night before. My bunch crept forward. Profiting from the night before. The Germans had a red cross flag up over their trench and were out picking up their wounded. My men were creeping about in no man’s land when one of the Fritzies spied us. He jumped up and waved his flag and shouted in very good English to come on. We went out – mingled with the Germans and collected wounded. We bandaged up a German officer and they did the same with one of ours. Then we exchanged men each taking his own. Lt. Boyle shot through the arm refused to leave his men – he did wonderful work. We came out in the evening to our billets in Albert – about 172 men – we lost 8 officers.

Oct. 11/1916 – Warloy

Dull day. Came down from Albert yesterday. Met Ray Morran on my way down. Looked up Earl Cumming in Warloy. He is looking well.

Oct. 12/1916

Stayed here all day. Pleasant day. Went to concert given by P.P.C.L.T in evening. It was good. Saw garvench there.

Oct. 13/1916 – Val De Maison

Dull day. Put in terrible night. Lousy as a coon. Scratched all night. Left Warloy at 1:30 pm. Put all my kit through fumigator. C.E got princes stove going this evening in our tent and I took bath.

Oct. 14/1916 - Berteaucourt

Fine cool day – cloudy. Up at 5 am. left camp. Band playing. Out poor little regiment – looking very small after our last trip where we lost 200 men and 8 officers but every one cheerful and singing. Passed through Talmas and on to Nauves. This little village is much like all other little Fr. Villages. Situated in a wooded valley on a little stream the Nieura R. a tributary of the Somme. One or two long narrow and winding streets dirty with the dirty little tumbling down rough cast houses with their barn yards in front and gardens and orchards of cedar apple trees behind. Here we passed a school where the teacher their pupils were all out to see the Canadians passing. We stopped to rest in the outskirts of the village where there were many orchards and I felt like a school boy as I stole the apples. From here on to Canaples we passed along a valley. The sides which have been turned into fields and groves of walnut – beech – and elm trees lined the white chalk road. Some of the roads – said to have been built by Napoleon – are sunken at Canaples we passed some pretty houses – but no matter how fine the house all had the piles of men were in front of the house. We passed through Halloy on to Bertincourt. Here the parson and I have good billet with an old Fr. Lade and I hope to have a good sleep in a real bed to-night. We expect to remain here for a few days.

Oct. 15/1916 Bertincourt

Took sick parade this am. Have written a number of letters this PM. Rained this am. went to church this evening in an old stone building which is used as a moving picture theatre by the YMCA. Service held by Padre – Rev. Macnamara of Collingwood. Mostly singing of old hymns.

Oct. 16/1916 Bertincourt

Pleasant day. Left Bertincourt at 9:30 and arrived here at 11:30. Short march – passed through little villages of farmers – no houses on farms. Am billeted with old dress maker. She is very cheerful and poor. Goes out to work in the after noon leaving key with me.

Oct. 17/1916 – Bertincourt

Dull day. Rain in pm. Went in to Doullens in PM. Col. Grusbauch and 7 officers rode in a London bus belonging to an Eng. Camp here. Passed immense aerodromes where these appeared to be hundreds of machines. One Br. machine had come to grief in a field near by and both wings broken off. Doullens is a good sized town of about 4 or 5000. The 1st. large town I have seen which has not been damaged by war. “Business as usual” is going on. Made a few purchases – among other things an apron to send to Eleanor. Had a game of billiards. Dinner in a private room with the rest of officers – at 7 pm arrived back to camp at 10 p.m.

Oct. 18/1916

Rain in the am and during night. Bright in pm. Padre and I went for a lovely ride to Bernaville in pm. about 4 miles to see ADMS. Had tea and got back after dark – I enjoyed it very much as our trip was through a beautiful part of country.

Oct. 19/1916 Bertincourt

Dull day – rain in am none in pm. Went for a ride through a number of country villages in pm.

Oct. 20/1916 – Warlus

Morning cold and clear – white frost –made early start from Bernevil. Walked part of way to keep warm. Bright day – passed through Berneville – close to Prouville. Arrived 12 noon. Good billet fixed up parcel for Eleanor.

Oct. 21/1916 Going

Very cold morning – ice on water – wore Br. warm – bright day. Started 7:15am – about 18 miles. Very hard trip – large number dropped out (40) of march. Arrived 2 pm. – poor village on our way to trenches.

Oct. 22/1916 – Cambligneul

Cold morning. Made trip of 12 miles. Walked most of way to keep warm. Sun shining all day. Got billet with Padre – with fire place. Felt miserable – cold – temp 100.

Oct. 23/1916 – Trenches (8:30 pm) La Parteque

Have just come into line North of Arras. We marched up this am to a place about 3 miles behind the front. I got my 1st pleasant surprise. There was no sound of guns. There was no ruins – no shell holes – women in the town and all this just 3 miles back – what a contrast to the somme. At dusk we marched in – hardly a sound – an occasional bomb could be heard but no cannonading – a few flares could be seen. Then we came to what was once a large flourishing town – in fact a famous Fr. Watering place which before the war was the residential place of many big Arras business men. Neuville St. Voos. In a dugout some where on what was the main st. of this town. We spent the night – but before finding our proper dug out our guide got lost in the trenches and we landed up somewhere near the front line where we had to get another guide to take us back through the maze of trenches. These trenches are all well built with board walks at the bottom. They wind and twist through the ruins of this town and at any time on can look over and see parts of walls standing. Along the sides of the trenches grass and shrubs grow. Our baggage wagons went astray on the way up and we had to wait until after one o’clock for it. Also some of our men got separated in the darkness and got on to a wrong road but we found them again in about ½ hour. My dug out is one which was guilt by the Fr. in a spot where they had one of their bloodiest battles. About 20 ft. deep under ground – the chamber is 15 ft. long – 10 ft. wide – 6 ½ ft. high at the centre – the ceiling being in the form of a semi circular arch of steel and painted white. Floor of boards – two tables – a stove and two chairs. These chairs and tables are from the ruins of the village and a piece of plate glass mirror about 2 ft. sq. acted as our mirror. The two beds – improvised spring beds – made of woven wire stretched over a frame – look very comfortable. The Dr. I am relieving is a very decent chap. He belongs to the 180th. Br. but is a New Zealander – we moved down to the front in am. Am feeling pretty punk T. 102.

Oct. 24/1916 – O. aid post

It has been a dull day. Came down through another maze of trenches this morning to this adv. Reg. aid post which is 3 or 400 yds from front line. My aid post is a model of dug outs and has had a great deal of time and work expended on it. It is about 20 feet deep and is reached by the 1st. decent flight of stairs I have seen to a dug out. The med room is about 15 ft. by 8 ft. by 6 ½ feet high. The ceiling of steel plates and board walls are white washed and there is a good floor. Along one side are white shelves for the dressings – a large table two carved Fr. chairs and at the far end two wire beds one above the over. The top one is mine. Opening of this room at one end is the room for the stretcher bearers – very comfortable with a stair way leading up from it and at the other end is a little hospital place – which is not yet complete (no floor on it yet). A little narrow gaze trench (the property of the RAMC) leads up through a wide trench to within 15 yds of the dressing stn. From the top of the stairs we can see the city of Arras – the numerous mine craters at our fronts. In the pm I went down to the front line to see one of our officers who was sick. I am still feeling punk – temp to-night 102. I hate to give in to have to go out but if it continues I guess I will have to. No wounded.

Oct. 25/1916

Rain. Trenches at front very muddy. No wounded. Down to front this pm. Very quiet except “minen werfers” and one can see them coming. Rats are terrible here. All last night they were fighting and squealing on the floor- over head – in the walls – there were at least 10 by fellows on the floor at once – one ate the pocket out of the padre’s tunic. Another got in to bed with his batman and started clawing his hair. Still feeling very rocky – am going to bed very early – temp. 100. Had a visit from a Major Gen. to-day. Do not know who he was. Our Col. who is at present Brigade Commander in place of Br. Gen McDonald who is sick – paid us a visit to-day.

Oct. 26/1916 – Trenches

Neuville St. Voos – dull with occasional showers. Conditions very quiet. We have been sending over a considerable no. or tr. Mortars. No casualties. Number of sick men – principally trench fever. Front trenches are very muddy. Visited our well to-day. It is worked by an Austrian pump - consisting of endless coil of wire passing over pulley at top and bottom of wall. Visited cave – it is in reality a mine about 40 ft. underground. It has a number of entrances leading into it. The interior consists of a number of dark arches and passage ways. There is a central round opening 4’ diameter in centre – leading directly up to surface. It was weird as we groped our way along from passage way to passage way – to come up on a bunch squatted in the smoke from a brazen around a candle. Some playing cards – some mending clothes. In one passage we came to a bunch sleeping. The cave will accommodate about 600 men. It is claimed that when the Fr. captured this place they threw gas bombs through the round shaft which lends to the top. Visited Capt. Birch of RCR in pm. Major Bagin and Capt. Ross were there. I am feeling much better. Temp. is still 100.

Oct. 27/1916 – Trenches – Neuville St. Voos

Dull day – rain in am. Made trip over whole front line to-day. Starting in at A and ending at D some of trenches are very muddy. A stakes lit close to us at D. Co. Had to make another trip to D to attend wounded officer. Trench mortar – who had an arm blown off and one lay wounded. The rats are no better. Temp nearly normal to-day.

Oct. 28/1916 – Trenches – Neuville St. Voos – Support

Raining when we were moving up. Have good little dug out but not very safe. The men have a bath house right in our support trenches. Hot water and a change of under clothes.

Oct. 29/1916 – Support trenches

Anniversary of wedding. Not very cheerful but fairly comfortable. Very little to do. Wrote two or three letters – raining in morning.

Oct. 31/1916 – Support

Fairly bright day. Visited by Major Basin – Col. Peters and Major Garsaline. Went down line to see patient. Part of an old piano lying outside of their dug out. The wires. Every where one sees things which were once ornaments in the Fr. houses. In front of our dug out entrance is a flower stand with a withered flower in it. A work party dug up a German helmet to-day. It is very quiet on our front – except machine gun and trench mortar. Got a parcel from Eleanor last night – had a nice cake in it. It also had a pair of socks. A chap came in with sore feet. His socks were ringing wet and I gave them to him. I am sure Eleanor will be pleased to know her socks were of such a benefit to someone. Gave my boys some of her cake. Rc’d letter from Maysie and Charlie.

Nov. 1st/1916

Rained in am. Sun came out in pm.

Nov. 3rd./1916

Fairly pleasant day. Few showers. Great aeroplane activity on this front. Counted 24 aeroplanes at one time. Considerable artillery – one shell lit close to dressing station. Saw three of our machines dart out from behind a cloud and open machine gun fires. It was rather dull and impossible to make and out which were our machines – although I think they practically all were. Moved back in to front line in evening. Found things in bad shape. Trenches had caved in in 87 places. We are holding over 1000 yds with about 300 men. Consequently it is almost impossible to do any work with trenches. They will get in to hopeless condition if we do not get help. I have been keeping men in the line with temp of 101 who should be in the hospital – for the simple reason that we can not spare one man. Where are those 50 000 men in Eng and Can? What are they trying to do with that fifth division? Why don’t they send up reinforcements? Our good old Sam Hughes – rats.

Nov. 4th/1916 p Frontline

Dull day – no rain in evening – moon light. It made a dismal picture. I climbed up on top and looked all round over all the desolation in the bright moon. Just as it used to shine in old Canada. But on the earth – everything in ruins. Nothing of the old town left. Trees cut off at the base – was up at front line to-day. Visited B.C. on way home when got word of casualty on front line D. Had to go forward to one of the stops near crater. Lt. Cape wounded in leg. Had hard time getting him up to dressing station. They kept sending over \_\_\_\_\_\_ grenades. Trenches in bad shape.

Nov. 5th./1916 – Frontline

Bright day – cold in evening. Had visit from Major Basin and Capt. Morrison. Col. Peters has left no. of amb. to take post in Eng. Quiet day – considerable artillery fire around our dressing station at noon. Some shells lit not more than 100 yds away. One whizz bang “ricochet” right over my head. Very peculiar noise.

Nov. 6th./1916 – Frontline

Rain – cold – trenches falling in. Great many men sick – but had to send most of them back to duty- owing to impossibility of sparing them. Considerable no. of shells dropped around dressing station – one big fellow sent the stones down in to my dug out. One of my men (Pat) made a hurried trip from latrine to dug out when a whizz-bang (dud) lit a few feet from him. Lt. Tool brought in with bayonet wound in thigh (jumped in to trench on top of bayonet)

Nov. 7th/1916 – Frontline

Rain all day and night. Trenches in bad condition – and falling in all over the place. Two men came in during night – slight shrapnel wounds – had been out in front of line – wiring. Fritz sent over bombing party. Padre went out to-night to bury man.

Nov. 8th/1916 Ecoivres Chateau

Showering – large no. of shells dropped around dressing stn. – one lit on top. Trenches in bad shape falling in in many places. Went out to try to find a good road for bringing wounded in. Went through a no of disused trenches half full of water. A rifle grenade lit close to us (dud) Up twice during night. Sniper took a shot at me to-day in part of trench that had fallen in. Bullet went 4 or 5 feet under. Came out of the line tonight about 8. Raining when we came out. My house was waiting for me at Le Targette cross roads. Rode down with Capt. Gro Hudson transport officer. I enjoyed my trip immensely even if it was raining. After spending 15 days underground and in muddy trenches it was good to be out in the open and to feel little Dolly under me. She was feeling good too – having been ridden very little during my absence from transport and I gave her her head. When I arrived at Ecoivres I found the Padre had got a room in the big chateau. He had a fire going in the fire place and two easy chairs drawn up. We had supper at a little Fr. café and I am now stretched out in front of the fire – the most at ease I have felt since leaving Canada.

Nov. 9th/1916 Ecoivres Chateau

It is a beautiful bright warm day. The 1st for a long time. Out chateau is an immense 3 storey building. The grounds comprising about 8 acres – is surrounded by a high stone wall. On entering the large arched gate way in front one enters a large court yard at the present time used for parking transport trucks. To the left are the rows of stone stables servants quarters +c. In front facing you is the entrance. At the left end – towards the servants quarters an arch way leads through the building – to the grounds beyond. Here one enters a little grove – with paths winding among the trees. The chateau itself is a three storey building of stone. Its large library – dining room – kitchen +c being much as they were left. Most of the smaller stuff has been packed away. Massive furniture of mahogany – walnut and inlaid furniture is still in the room. Paintings on the walls – silver in the cabinets – old china still in its place on the walls. It speaks well for the behavior of the Br. soldiers who are occupying it as compared with the plundering of the Germans. Went out for a walk in the garden after breakfast and it was good to lap and the lungs with fresh air again. Then the padre and I went for walk. I wanted to walk and walk and walk. After dinner I had a bath and change of clothes. Took sick parade in pm and then went for a ride.

Nov. 10th/1916 – Ecoivres

Bright day. Sick parade in am went to Aubigny in pm with Padre. Bought spoons saw ADMS – got lamp for dressing stn. Rec’d parcel from Eleanor with nice warm suit of under clothes.

Nov. 11th/1916 – Ecoivres

No rain. Sick parade in am. Got Br. warm from Q.M stores. Sent away my B.W. and dressing stn. Padre and I were to go to Arras but communication failed and I made myself comfortable.

Nov. 12th/1916 – Ecoivres (Sunday)

Dull – no rain. Sick parade in am – went for ride. Col. Grossbach went for conference to-day. Padre had 4 services. Wrote letters most of afternoon.

Nov. 13th/1916 – Front trenches

Near Neuville St. Voos. Dull. Spent most of day preparing for trip in. Padre and I rode up to Le Targette. Got in to trenches about 7pm.

Nov. 14th/1916 - Front trenches

Rain. Fritz very busy with trench mortars and grenades. No. of casualties. No of shells lit close to dressing stn. Up two or three times during night. Wind in proper direction for gas. Gas alert fgiven in morning at 11.

Nov. 15/1916 – Front trenches

Bright cold morning – shelling around aid post at noon. Quiet day. Br. have taken. Br. take strong positions on Ancre.

Nov. 16/1916 – Front trenches

Bright cold morning. Quiet day. Wind favorable for gas attack – put guard in aid post. We bellowed with the greatest rejoicings of two important events. The 1st – we have received full account of the wonderful Br. success on the Ancre in the capture of Beaumont Hamel and Beaucourt in Ancre. With them 600 prisoners. The 2nd was the resignation of Sir Sam. There is not a man in France but what rejoices that a crazy man who has been usurping power which never belonged to him and who has been and made Canada ridiculous in the eyes of our mother country. We have all looked for him to be kicked out of office for a long time. I have always looked upon him as an imbecile and blamed our Dom. Government for being hood winked so long. But now that it is all over let us “thank god” that a great nuisance has been removed and let us hope that they will profit by the experience and not make the same mistake again.

Nov.17/1916 – Frontline

Last night was very cold. I felt cold in bed. To-day has been bright and cold. Even at 3pm – ice in trenches was solid enough in places to hold a man. This after noon I went up to a Co. with Padre and Padre Green of R.C.R. I took them across a short cut through vert Halo and the sunken road and succeeded in getting into wrong trench. When we got our bearings we were not a stone’s throw from the crater of a mine – which was in the hands of the Huns. We made a hasty retreat. Lt. Boyle had found a new German rifle which he had taken apart. We visited our stokes guns and watched it in action. We visited trench mortar emplacements – visited the observation trench. Got back at 5:30. Quiet day on our front. Very cold to-night.

Nov. 18/1916 – La Porteque (tr)

Dull day. Drizzling rain. Quiet day on our front. Fritz raked our parapet at intervals last night. Moved to support trenches to-day.

Nov. 19/1916 – La Porteque (Sunday)

Dull – no rain. Night very dark. Went out to La Targette Brigade H.Q. – met Gen MacDonald. He is a great old chap – one can talk to him and feel as comfortable as though we are talking to one of his own rank. Having been wounded once he is extremely interested in the care of the wounded. Went to cave there – it was once a quarry. 69 steps lead down a narrow winding stair way cut in solid rock – coming out of the bottom into an immense underground place – immense arched passages 200 ft. long by 30 ft. wide. Lined in either side with wire beds and illuminated by immeasurable candles – wings branch out to open at their farther ends into similar rooms. I did not explore them all – one of them lead to the cook kitchen where food is cooked over fireplace resembling where we used to bail our sap. The smoke being conducted through an opening leading up through the rock to the surface. In the evening we had a little service in our mess room. The H.Q officers and men. Text from St. Matthew “Christ in the sea of Galilee” we sang many hymns. Two shells burst close to H.Q. – machine guns play in our little railroad over which we cross to go to meals.

Nov. 20/1916 – La Porteque – Trenches

Dull day – little rain. Large no. sick with trench fever. Wrote O.C. condemning Carnot cover. One of our men had a narrow escape – whizz-bang came so close to him that it took off his hat.

Nov. 26/1916 – La Porteque

Fine day – quiet.

Nov. 22/1916

Fine day – inspected cave – went down to D.B.C. H.Q in Pylones Trench to see Capt. Chartell (T.S) Saw a day out there that Can. Are digging. 25 ft. deep cut out of lime stone rock. Over 250 ft. long. Long corridor 4 ft. wide with rooms on the sides. Large no. of entrances. Coming home large no. of M.G. bullets whistled over our heads at a low part of trench. On our way home had a Minnie light close to me – they are devils of things.

Nov. 23rd./1916 – Frontline

Fine day. Stood out and watched an aeroplane battle – over 30 planes. It was a wonderful sight – to see these machines away up – like specks – circling diving. The flashes from machine guns – the signals while they were bunched the guns on the ground could not fire at them – for fear of hitting our own machines. But when they got an enemy machine singled out from the others – the guns opened up. I was so interested in watching the combat that I did not notice that some of the planes had got directly over head – until I heard – “zing” close at hand. I looked up and saw the air full of white balls of smoke and fire of bursting shells. Of course the shrapnel from those shells reaches the ground before the sound of their explosion. I was not long in getting under cover and a large number of pieces fell close by. Made another trip to Pylones trench. Took over from the R.C.R at 5pm. – they go back to Ecoivres.

Nov. 24th/1916 – Frontline

Slight rain – quiet day. One month from to-night (Xmas eve)

Nov. 25/1916 – Frontline

Fine day – sun shining. Watched our big Tr mortar firing and German replying with stokes – sausages.

Nov. 26/1916

Went down to front line in am (B.Co.) – down Ross Trench – some parts badly torn up by Tr mortars – front line very muddy – came back by Dr La Fourchet saw the big Tr. mortars- examined a little gun near the cave. Watched aeroplane scrap.

Nov. 27/1916 – Front

Fine day – cold. To-night Germans blew up two mines to left of our front. About 9 pm. all guns and machine guns on both sides opened up for about one hour. I went out and watched. Made me think of the somme. Shells could be seen bursting continuously all along the front. Flares green – blue – red and white going up. The flares cast different colors making a pretty scene of the bursting shells with the different coloured smoke. Earth and pieces of timber from trench frames could be seen flying in air. A shrapnel shell burst just above me and I made a hasty retreat to dug out as the pieces came flying in to trench. Was not down very long when a shell lit close by and then another that smashed our door open. We figured out what our dug out would stand and concluded that a 5.9 on top of dug out would land us all in the next world. Fritz dropped a large no of shells around but luckily none on top. Surely he was not deliberately shelling our station. Yesterday one of our large tr. mortar ( in next batt. ) fell short – crashed through 18ft. of earth into dug out – killing 8 of our officers. An Eng. Artillery officer – speaking of the men in Eng. spoke of their “Insular Eng Concert”.

Nov. 28/1916 – Chateau Ecoivres

No rain – cold. Relieved by R.C.R. M.O Dr. McCaskel at 5 pm. Mix up over horses. Padre and I walked in (15 miles) the Chateau. Have same room. No casualties among our men last night. Lt. \_\_\_\_\_ crawled out to the German lines last night and stole their little sign “Wecome Canadians”

Nov. 29/1916 – Chateau

Very cold – misty. Took sick parade in am. Wrote all pm. Lt. Henry and Murray in in evening.

Nov. 30/1916 – Chateau

Cold – dull. Sick parade in am. Padre and I went to Aubigny in pm.- home 6:30. Saw ADMS. This darned old Chateau is as cold as a barn. Cant get coal or oil or candles. Wish we were back in line again. Our day out is more comfortable than this. Have not been warm since coming out.

Dec. 1st/1916 – Chateau

Cold – misty- moon shining at night. Padre and I rode over to Arras in pm about 10 miles. West by the Doullons – Arras road. It is paved with cobble stones and lined by rows of large elm and ask trees. In any exposed parts screens of gunny sack material 12 feet high – passes from tree to tree – for miles. The city of Arras is entered by the large stone gate guarded by End and Fr sentries. We left our horses in a battered down building near the gate and walked down the streets. The German lines are only a few hundred lines beyond the city. Arras is a good city with a population in peace time of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The streets are wide and clean and as a rule straight. A few civilians still remain and a few women can be seen. We passed through side streets closed – our feet making an echoing sound in the empty street. It gave one a creepy feeling wandering about that old city just at dusk – with all those empty houses – some badly damaged by shell fire. We wandered about not knowing where we were going. All public building in ruins. It was getting dark but we knew there must be a cathedral somewhere. At last we found it. An immense old place – long flights of stone steps leading up. It was almost in ruins – yet the houses 100 yds away were not touched. We passed up the stone steps and entered. I thought what a grand place it must once have been with its immense pillars – now all in ruins. In one of the recesses which had escaped – two images still remain. By this time it was almost dark – we hurried back – had a hard time finding out way through the deserted streets. The Germans were shelling the city when we were there. We had a nice home in the moon light. Padre is not very well to-night.

Dec. 3rd/1916 Chateau

Very cold. Padre sick in bed all day. I have stayed in with him all after noon.

Dec.3rd/1916 – Frontline

Dull – no rain – dense mist in pm. Left Ecoivre at 3pm. Inspected camp at barn Des Alleux – left early for front – walking. Train ran in to med cart – broke it. Took over from R.C.R at 5pm. Padre stayed down.

Dec. 4th/1916 – Frontline

Dull day – no rain – beautiful night. Quiet day.

Dec. 5th/1916 Frontline

No rain – sharp artillery duel this pm. Two serious accidents occurred last night. Cpl. Dr. Sal was out in front of our lines without telling sentry. When sentry say him he took him for German and shot him dead. Another of our men shot by our own M.G. fire. Was down to front line to-night to see C.S.M of D. Co. who is sick. Padre arrived.

Dec. 6th/1916

Misty. Was at C and D co. this am. German prisoner brought in while I was down – shot through head. Could get no information out of him – was 21 yrs old. Prussian ( 23 old) Our artillery silenced Josephine to-day. Can. Artillery behind us now – better that Br.

Dec. 7th/1916 – Frontline

Misty – no rain. Went down to A Co. – front line to-day. Sent number of Xmas cards.

Dec. 8th/1916 – La Parteque (Dugout)

Dull day. Found a skeleton of Fr. soldier behind our trench – when it was foggy. He had a post card on him from his sister dated July 1915. He was to go home for leave the next week. Suppose he was reported missing. Moved into support at 4pm. at 6:30 pm. 5.9 let lit dugout behind ours ( 40 yds away\_ wounded two men. Dressed them in our trench and while we were doing so Fritz put over a number of whizz bangs – which passed directly over aid post. While taking case out – Fritz swept the little railway with machine gun. I had my closest call – one bullet going so close that I could feel the wind in my face. Happened to be in a very muddy part of road and I ducked into it and crawled behind a stone wall. He kept it up for some time.

Dec. 9/1916 – Support

Raining. One thing after another is cut out. To-night no coke – no more coaloil on issue and they sent up three candles to run two dug outs for 24 hrs. Can not buy candles and coaloil can be bought 16 miles away (\_\_\_). Mail did not get in last night until 10pm. It is also late tonight. Received a box from “Can. war contingent assn. containing 45 cans cocoa and 18 doz. tins oxo.

Dec. 10/1916 – La Porteque

Bright morning. 1st we have had for a long time. Aeroplanes were up all over ours and the Huns. Saw several fights. We brought two enemy machines down. Fritz put in a number on shells. Heard of the crisis in Br. cabinet. Every one here considers that change will be for good. Lloyd George has a wonderful chance to “do things”.

Dec. 12/1916

Dull day – snowed this am. Trenches in terrible condition- mud and falling in. Strong artillery work on our side. Went down to Aux \_\_\_\_ came in p.m. Got back after dark.

Dec. 13/1916 – Frontline

Dull. Trenches in terrible condition – moved in to front line to-day. Took over at 4:430pm.

Dec. 14/1916 – Frontline

Lost two of our men last night – Fritz stole them from sap at Crater A. Co.

Dec. 19/1916 – Bois Des Alleux Huts

Dull day – came out of trenches to-night – walked in – arrived at 8 pm. Huts seem fairly comfortable. Had dinner in big mess hut.

Dec. 20/1016 – Huts

Rained all day – cold. Padre and I room together in end of head quarters hut. No fire last night – no coal and any wood we could get was very wet. Cold in bed and getting up. Mess tent 35’ by 20 feet. Tables in form of 3 sides and square room for 50 officers. Do not like it as well as individual mess. Very large sick parade – over 100. Colds and sore feet. Have lost laundry and cant change.

Dec. 21st/1916 – Huts

Dull day – rained most of day. This is our Xmas day. In many respects quite Xmas like. Boys take as much interest as youngsters in opening parcels from home – candy – nuts – cigarettes – Xmas cake – plum pudding +e. But no children and women about and therefore not much like Xmas. A big tree fell on my hut to-night- smashing it in. Big Xmas dinner at 7 pm. Every one cheerful. No one thinking of any danger.

Dec. 22/1916 – Huts

Dull and raining – spent all fore noon with sick parade – visit from ADMS. Examined draft in after noon. Too busy to have a ride on Dolly. Visited Major Bazin in evening.

Dec. 24/1916 – Frontline

Raining for last four days. Came in to line this evening – rode up on Dolly. Took over from RCR. Trenches in terrible condition – falling in – mud up over knees in places. Aid post leaking badly – floor wet and muddy – walls wet and water dripping from top. Hardly a dry place to stay. Xmas eve – rotten sort of Xmas eve – uncomfortable and cold. Rations delayed.

Dec. 25/1916 – Frontline

Dull – rain in am. Very quiet. Guns on neither side working. It seems strange not to hear machine guns rattling. Tr. mortar shells bursting bombs – shells +e. Even a little bird perched over dug out this morning and sang a little song. Our boys and Fritzies meet in no man land – shake hands – exchange souvenirs. No hatred to-day. Then something happens. Some say we started it some say not. But I think it was one of our men who did not respect the day. Away back behind the front line and shot a Fritzie. Then from behind the Fritz lines 3 shots were fired wounding two of our men. No more fraternizing during day. Not another shot fired on our front until twelve mid night. To our left a sharp engagement took place in evening. Heavy artillery fire and bombs.

Dec. 26/1916 – Frontline

Rain – guns busy again this am.

Dec. 27/1916

Rain – Padre has not come up yet.

Dec. 28/1916

Dull – went down to D Co. to-day. Trenches in very bad shape. Our Aid Post still leaking. Engineers propped up mess end. Have a cold. Blew up mess in D. Co. to-night at 10pm. Waiting for wounded but there did not seem to be to much doing after mine went up. No artillery fire. Had only one wounded man – shot through leg. Had entire stretcher squad up from ambulance.

Dec. 29th/1916 – Support

Relieved by RCR to-night. Capt. Buck has been sent to No. X and Capt from No. TX. Takes his place. Buck been with Batt for 15 mos. Dugout at Portique leaking in places about3” water on floor. Aid post heavily shelled this pm with whizz-bangs. One hit in front of our door – another lit in top of dug out.

Dec. 30/1916 – Portique

Dull – very heavy rain during night. Dug out leaking badly. Batman busy all day bailing out water. Nose cap of shell lit very close to me to-day. We are sending over a lot of shells – Fritz not returning many.

Dec. 31/1916 – Portique

Bright for part of day – with nos. of showers. Heavy artillery. Saw men going over land at front line. Sent out Cpt. Marret – Cpl. Harrison.

Jan. 1st/1917 – Portique

New Year’s – dull – with showers. Fritz shelled heavily at 12 mid-night – heavy shelling all day. Padre came up to-night.

Jan 2nd/1917 – Portique

Dull-rain. Fritz put away a lot of stuff to-day – shrapnel. Shell went in to dug out – killed 3 and wounded 2. Padre Green paid us a visit to- night.

Jan 3rd/1916 – Frontline

Dull – heavy artillery bombardment by our guns.

Jan 4th/1916 – Frontline

Bright day. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ went down to front line through tunnel. It was a wonderful place 50 feet deep. Stand to at night.

Jan. 5/1917

Bright. Cold. Have not had any coke for 2 days making dug out cold. Padre went out this am – two Aeroplanes brought down to-day. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Jan. 6/1917 – Front

\_\_\_\_\_\_ - Cold\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ off this morning. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Fritz \_\_\_\_\_\_ lengthy bombardment this morning with big stuff.

Jan. 16th/ 1917 – Aubigny 10pm

Got word to-day that I was to go on leave to-night. Left the lines at noon – got things ready at Ecouvres and rode over here at 6pm. very dark. I am now sitting on a kitbag in a little rest hut (canvas). It is very cold – my hands are numb – my feet are cold – snowing and blowing outside – a little fire is smoking way in one corner of the hut – filling hut with smoke and giving out absolutely no heat. Other officers wrapped up in their great coats are huddled about the little fire or trying to sleep sitting on the floor. Legs sprawled out – backs against the posts of the hut – but one can not sleep it is too cold. Near by is a ymca but full of Tommies singing, smoking and laughing – while outside I hear others tramping up and down to keep warm – for what does a little discomfort matter we are going on leave. Train is now due but will not likely arrive until near morning.

Jan. 17th/1917 – Hotel De Commence Calais 10pm

After miserable night spent in hut at Aubigny – Train arrived at 3am. I got in to a compartment minus two windows – as cold as outside – little drifts of snow on the seat. Eighteen hrs making a 4 hr trip – Dullens – Abberville – Boulogne – Calais. At every stop we got out and stamped our feet to keep from freezing. Again we did not mind for we are going on leave. Arrived at Calais 8pm (rain & sleet) – walked across the city to officers Rest Camp and got bed. Major Ewing of 42nd and I went out and were able to get rooms in this little hotel – had dinner here – hope to have a good sleep.

Jan. 18/1917 – Strand Palace – London

Back to civilization – old London seems almost like home. Good to hear girls and women talking in Eng. For six months I have heard nothing but French (from old boys in estaminet and billets) Crossed from Calais to Folkestone this morning. Got a diner and had a good meal on train. Arrived in London about one and come to hotel. Did some shopping in the after noon. Had a god lean up including – haircut – shampoo – shave – massage and bath and a complete change. Leave for Liverpool to-night.

Jan. 19/1917

Home. No need to write anything now for I shall always remember all the details of my few days spent here.

Jan. 29th/1917 – Great North Western Liverpool 11pm

All over. Have left heaven and on my way back to hell. I shall never forget the last ten days. They shall always stand out as an oasis in a desert. Had a grand trip across from Peel to Liverpool or the Tynwald. Had dinner at great western – went to picture show and leave for London at Mid-night.

Jan. 30/1917 – Strand Palace- London – 1:30am.

Arrived at Euston Station 6:30am. Could not get taxi – took tubes to Charing Cross. Met Lt. Martin in Strand Palace. Went to show this after noon “Daddy Long Legs” – dinner at Strand Palace. Show at night “Chu Chin Chow” – went out with Lt. Martin for lunch at one of Lyons Cafes.

Jan. 31/1917 – Hotel Des Londres – Boulogne

Up at 5:30am – breakfast 6am – taxi to Victoria Stn. – left 7:20 – Folkestone 9:15 – left on boat 10am. Arrive Boulogne 12 noon. No leave train out to-day – has not been one for 3 days. Many leave men in tow. Staying at Hotel Des Londres.

Feb. 2nd/1917 – 7am. – St. Pal

Left Boulogne yesterday – 10:30am – very long train. Very cold – ground covered with snow – train crowded – terrible trip in crowded freezing coach by Abbeville – Doullars. Men and officers get off where they were told. Arrived at St. Pal at 1 am. Train not going any further – returning to take a bunch on soldiers on leave. Still 25 miles from home. Went across to “Officers Rest” – opposite stn. No bed – sat in chair until morning – fire went out – no coal. Very cold. Unable to sleet – got up every few min to stamp around to keep from freezing.

Feb 2nd / 1917 – E\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_??- 10pm.

Had light breakfast this am in a little Fr. Hotel. Got train at 1pm. Arrived \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? 3pm. Caught ambulance to Ecarvres?. Found bunch of padres in my room at Chateau. Had to stay at I.M Stores. Poot St. Juellet killed while I was away. Our Batt made successful raid while I was away. Captured a no. of prisoners. Very successful- no casualties on our side – did much damage. Will go in to lines to-morrow.

Feb 3rd – Front Line – 9pm

Cold – clear – ground covered with snow. Walked in with Major Weaver and Batman about 3pm. Capt. Dunlop (my relief) man of about 40 – Calgary – in France a week before coming up. Will not leave until morning. Trenches frozen up. Water and mud hard. Men like it much better than mud and rain.

Feb 4th – Front Line – 9pm

Clear – cold. Aeroplane activity. Severe encounter over aid post. Very low. About 10:30 am I was sitting in my dug out when I heard the hum of aeroplanes and rattle of machine guns. That peculiar sound when they are fired up in the air. I rushed up to the trench above and was just in time to see a German machine go head first to the ground just behind their lines. A short distance above dressing station. I saw one of our machines that had done the work. It was not a fighter – just a slow observation machine. Then out of the blue sky I saw a German battle plane appear. Like a streak of lightning it swooped onto our little slow machine. There was the rattle of a machine gun. Our aeroplane swerved suddenly and righted itself. The enemy machine banked sharply and with the speed of a bullet shot back towards the German lines. Our little machine having righted itself started to spiral to the ground. It seemed to be making a good landing a few hundred yards from where I stood, but its speed was great and the spot of coming to the ground was in an old ruined village (Neunette St Vaas). I saw it strike the ground swing around and then I heard the crash of breaking from work. Again I heard the rattle of guns in the sky. Our other little machine which had brought down the german was in distress. A German battle plane had the advantage. Our machine burst into flames – still she didn’t give up – she swerved and her machine gun rattled – but the enemy got away. The flames were increasing. Then our little machine dived nose first towards the ground. The flames shooting up behind. God what a sight. I held my breath – I stared at it \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a little prayer worked in my brain. God help them. About half way to the frozen earth – the flaming machine suddenly righted itself, took a partial spiral – and again dived – again righted itself – and dived until within about 100 yards of the earth and again righted itself and spiraled to the earth a flaming mass. Surely no one could escape. Behind me I heard the one work “god” almost whispered. I looked around and saw two red cross men – standing as I was – spell bound. Later I heard the fate of the machines. The pilot of the 1st machine had been shot through the body – twice – yet had regained consciousness to bring his machine to the ground. The other mad had both legs broken. Both were alive – they were Canadians. The other machine made the landing in flames, but as she ran along the ground – its nose caught in a trench and she toppled over on top of the pilot and immediately was a mass of flames. The pilot (plucky fellow) was burnt to death under his machine. The observer had the wonderful fortune to escape with a burnt leg and of course considerable shock. I do not know the fate of the Germans.

Sniping is very active – but we have Fritz beaten at this game. We have a wonderful bunch of snipers in our Batt.

Feb 5th – Frontline –

Cold – clear – calm. Saw another aeroplane fight today. A large fleet of our machines (battle planes) flying very high passed over the German lines. When there were gone, one of our observation machines came out and was observing the German lines. It seemed to be almost stationary at a height of a few hundred yards. Suddenly 3 fast German Battle planes attacked it – one from each side and one from the front. They all opened fire – I expected to see it come down, but it did some wonderful maneuvering. Being a much slower machined than the Germans it could not out distance them. It suddenly dived and then went through as fine a piece of dodging as I ever saw. The German machines followed it – pegging away with their machine guns. When they were just over the aid post not more than 300 yards up – they gave up the chase. I wished I had a rifle and I could have taken a shot for they banked and I could see the driver distinctly. Our machine made a safe landing. Many of the bullets hit on and around the dressing station. The German machines had square tails – not the fish shaped ones.

Feb 6th - Frontline –

Cold – bright – clear. Sun shining. Aerial activity – sniping active

Feb 7th. Partique

Cold – Bright – clear – Heavy bombardment of Fritz lines today. Moved out to support today.

Feb 8th Partique –

Clear – bright – Aeroplane activity – Fritz on machine brought down close by.

Feb 9th – Partique

Bright – clear – cold

Feb 10th. – Partique

Bright – clear – about 7pm. Fritz blew a mine on our front – opened artillery fire and tried to come over. Shelled all around our area – no. of casualties but Fritz was unable to come over.

Feb. 11th – Partique

Bright –cold- calm. Br. war plane came overhead – gave an exhibition over the German lines of his skill in loop the loop. Turned over in the air – diving etc. and then went over the line and away into German territory.

April 7th /1917 – Frontline

Has been a pleasant day. Got orders to move into the line. To-night with A&B cos. Busy all day preparing. Visited no. of field ambulance at Vardlers au Bois to arrange for dressing etc. Lunch at ambulance at 12:30. Major Bazen and vipond etc. 2pm. loaded dressings – food etc. on the timbers to go to the little train. 6pm went over to see 15” gun and a number of smaller ones. Dinner in tent at 7:30. Left for front line with Len and Frank at 8pm. Sgt. And Marrett remained behind to come up with C&D moon light. Traffic very heavy. Troops – motor transopoers with no lights showing – ambulances, pack trains etc.. Took the winding board walk road past Berthenthall Farm. Everywhere guns firing and all sizes. The flashes appearing all over the place – before we would notice then we would be right in the top of a battery and it would go off with its deafening roar. Once we were almost knocked down by an immense gun firing close to the side of our walk. The air was full of whizzing shells. Far ahead we could see them bursting on Vimy Ridge which we so soon hope to call ours. Occasionally the whine and crash of an incoming shell made us duck (a number killed and wounded on this road to-night) From Beltune Arras road we took Pont Street. It was in terrible state in places knee deep in thick tenacious mud. Fritz shelled this trench rather heavily – some of the shells being gas shells. Quarries line badly congested – a number of whizz bangs lit just over this trench. Arrived at aid port “Corner of Quarries and La Salle at 11:30pm. Very tired. One of our balloons brough down 4pm)

April 8th/ 1917 – Frontline

Slept or at least lay in corner of aid port with my coat over me. No casualties during night – I brought in no blankets last night. Bright day – very heavy shelling by our guns – Fritz retaliating with H.E dropped H.E in to Quarry Line. No of casualties. Our men in tunnels and dug outs. Walked over to HQ which is on Cross Street 500 yards from here. This pm all arrangements complete for to-morrow. Fritz brought down one of our Aeroplanes to-day in his lines. Short of water – one of our wells crumpled in – rations not plentiful- (Capt. Hole and padre and I) eat together. Visited by Gen MacDonald to-day who expressed himself satisfied with arrangements. Fritz shelling our Quarry line with H.E at head of tunnel 150 yards north of R.ap. – 7am – stayed up and let Hole and Padre go to sleep. Stg Frances not in yet. Our guns very lively. Will try to get an hours sleep.

April 9th – Front line

4:30 am. – got up and had light breakfast. Starting what I hope to be greatest day in Can history. We will have many casualties and if we do not take Vimy Ridge – casualties will be terrible. But I know we will take it for the Germans can not mass enough troops to stop them.

5 am Capt. Hole and Capt. Fitpatrick left to take up position at relay post at head of grange tunnel – accompanied by Sgt. Owston & Cpl.

5:30 am- Hell broke loose from our artillery – every gun behind us opened fire at once. Big guns – 18 pdrs. – machine guns as far as can be seen along the front line a continuous barrage – with absolutely no break can be seen. Bursting shells – a grand yet terrible sight – one would think that a mouse could not live over there.

5:45am – Barrage has been gradually lifting. Fritz coming back with feeble retaliation with artillery.

6am – Five German prisoners (wounded) came in to aid post – many unwounded Germans (about 30) brought down into other end of dugout. The wounded me came in to aid post and even though wounded came to attention and some of them saluted. (one of them an officer) The officer shook hands with me and was very profuse with thanks. I used my German and got some peculiar stories – could have got all kinds of souvenirs, one fellow – wounded in face – left arm half blown away – wound in his right arm said “ For the last few days it has been hell. The Br. shells kept rations from coming in and for two days I have had no food- “Ich Putch” give me something to eat “ We gave him bread - some of Eleanor’s nice fruit cake and hot tea. “Ich Thanke Schane Komorade” it is all finished. This hell- I go to England good. I have a wife and 3 little children. Another told us that so severe had been the bombardment for the last few days that when the real bombardment started this morning that he saw many shoot themselves. Another told us that the soldiers got enough to eat but their families were starving. Some were Bavarians – Prussians – etc.. I told one officer that the US had declared war. “That makes no difference – they can make no difference in the war – we are fighting Br. and French and the US can make it no worse”

6:30am Many of our wounded coming in now – very busy. Our aeroplanes are doing excellend work. Barrage still on. Can see our Canadians almost at top of Vimy close to Le Sabre wood. I went up to the top to put a stretcher case on the truck and climbed the parapet to have a look. It was grand to see those Canadian boys away up there in that country that we have looked over at all winter. Many of the wounded said “I wish I could have gone along with our boys” Yes our casualties will be heavy – but this is the big day in Canadian history.

8:15am – Word has come in that the Canadians have gained all objectives. Guns still roaring – shells dropping into La Sabre wood. Wounded say German trenches are full of dead. Some said that they got in some bayonet work. Others said “the dirty swine ran like rats” Until noon busy with wounded dressed over 40 myself. They are all very cheerful. Each one gets a hot drink.

12noon – Word has come in that Sgt. Owston has been killed. His chum came into aid post and cried for half an hour. The poor chap took it very hard. The Sgt. was an excellent boy “DCM & M.M” He was killed dressing a wounded German. One S.B. told me that in searching for the wounded he saw a German officer in a hole. Thinking he was wounded he went up to help him and when he got near Fritz sliced a bomb at him – it went inside. The S.B carrying no fire arms went and got an officer who had a nice automatic. “Fritz is in the shell hole now” The PP Ch pipe band played the Br. anthem when they attacked this am.

1:15pm Holding all gains. Germans. Prisoners coming in hundreds. After noon much quieter. Good reports coming in captured Fritz acting as stretcher bearers for us.

3pm. Got sample of water from German well to examine. Found it free from poison. No rations in tonight for us. We are pretty short. Have got a god supply of water in (56 gal.)

6pm – Dinner – Beef steak

8pm. No rations came up for us tonight but we have some bully beef and sea biscuits left. Received som mail. Runner Taylor brought it over – letter form Eleanor and one from Jim. Few cases coming in here 0 our aid post is not in good locations. Report that counter attack put on PP Cl easily repulsed with losses. To enemy – by M.G. fire. Capt. Young of no viii called in.

10:30pm – Major Selby came in. Have given him a bed for a few hours rest. Have racks (stretcher\_ pretty well filled up with slightly wounded officers and men who will go out in am. Visited by Cal Palmer and Paddy Nolan.

12pm. Our guns keeping up bombardment – not intense.

1:30am April 10/1917

My birthday- not very pleasant surroundings for birthday but it might be a lot worse – especially if artillery was reversed. I will have a little toddy of rum as a celebration.

2:30am Bed

5:30am – Breakfast – very few wounded in while I was asleep. Wounded 112 men in said 4th div. had taken their objective. They fell a little short of it yesterday morning.

8am – Few German shells falling here – Hear a number of them crashing behind us.

10am – Few cases coming in. Most of stretcher cases going to M.G Sort. Went down to all B.HQ at Fort. We will probably take over front line in top of Vimy to-night and I shall move forward into German dug out. When Capt. Hole took over German dug out yesterday he found 4 Germans in it.

2 pm. – Our guns open heavy bombardment at 1st all along the front & later on our left in 4th division front Numerous Rumors – “Fritz counter attacked & was wiped out by out barrage” The 11th Division advancing etc.” Do not know but expect the latter.

3pm. Word that Fritz has pulled out his forward guns – retaliating with heavies. One of my sanitary men & one of my SB have been killed.

10pm – Went to BN- H.Q. – Returned at 1am. Bed at 2am. On way home Fritz put over some 9”. When we got back into dug out one lit about 15 or 20 ft from dug out door – putting out all candles.

Apr. 11 – A Rap day much like yesterday. Went to M.9.F in am at 12 noon our guns opened bombardment – 58th went over & cleared up some Germans in strong points beyond hill (La Folie wood. Most of 49th in tunnel waiting orders to move forward.

1:30 – Orders that Br. move forward & relieve 42nd and 11/2 PPCL.

3 pm. – Got dressings etc. ready for move forward.

3:15pm. – Left for front (Sgt. Francis- Francis – Len & I) passed up Grange Tunnel. This tunnel is about 35 ft. underground – 4 ft. wide – 7 ft. high and extending from far back up to Duffield Crater. It is one of many such tunnels which run up to the front line & these tunnels have been big factors in the success of this offensive. Through them ammunitions- provisions- water & troops pass up & emerge in no mans land. During the bombardment the soldiers stayed in here – safe from shell fire. For the 1st 250 yards we squeezed past number of our troops – some standing some sitting down with their knees drawn up. A little track runs along the bottom& electric lights at top. At intervals we passed openings leading up to trenches above. Maps on the wall show the course of tunnel. Rooms dug off from the main tunnel act as store rooms etc. in one of these rooms a little gasoline engine – supplying light to tunnel. Pile extends along the top for piping water up. Emerging from tunnel on the lip of crater we passed over it & thought the crater & over the other side into what was for so long – Fritz land. Out wagon road is already built through crater line. From here on we went by general sense of direction. Fritz shelling with H.E – Whizz bangs & shrapnel & a few snipers bullets whistle about. God! What destruction – what a contrast to our side of the craters. I can understand why Fritz gave himself up – why he committed suicide & why he said that our bombardment was worse than hell. Not a square inch of ground remains that has not been churned up. Not a sign of a trench remains but immense shell holes – some of them half filled with water – all tinged with red. Some of it almost pure red. A German helmet here – a piece of clothing – an arm or a leg sticking out of the bloody water. No as the Hun says this is not war it is slaughter. I saw few dead Germans that were not blown to pieces. Rifles & bayonets some broken scattered about. We went in Easterly direction until we reached what was left of “Saytosse Meg” near La Folie wood & turned to left in this trench. Ecale Commune is a heap of ruins surrounded by a few stumps of trees. La Folie woods is a bunch of stumps & broken trees. Our front line runs through the centre of it. Fritz dropping a number of shells in to woods. Found dug out at jn \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The trench is in terrible condition. A dead German still lies a few feet from the door of dugout. Door faces Fritz line & is very low – uneven steps lead down about 20 ft. It was once German Officers quarters & many of his things remail – although most of it has been taken. Black bread – a box of cigars – wine bottles- cans of “Rhineflusch” & asparagus. Ammunition – pictures etc. A box containing shaving utensils “Colgates” shaving soap- candles – The walls are covered with planks - the shape is (diagram)

Our front line in centre of La Folie wood 6:30 – Snowing very heavily. Dressed a no of cases out in trench which is nothing better than a mud hole. Mud half way up to knees. Remained up all night until 5 am. Lay down for one hour on German bed. Board floor bottom with straw \_\_\_\_ & grey blankets.

April 12th – Aid post – Vimy Ridge

Up at 6am. very few casualties during night. About 4” snow on ground. German snipers very active during night. Went around co. at 10 am. Men very tired- no dugouts left for them. Some of them have had little sleep for 5 days = all have 5 or 6 days growth of whiskers. Very muddy. Eyes ready to close the minute the men sit down. Faces showing the strain of the last few days. \_\_\_\_ pinched & pale appearance. They are completely done out & yet they are all cheerful still joking and they have no idea how long they will have to stay here in the cold & wet. They do not know what minute they will be called or to go over the top or aim or to meet a counter attack. They have come to a stage when they don’t care. They are working now on their good Can. Reserve & the elation of victory. I looked over the ridge on to the Downy Plain – close at hand (1/2 mile beyond our ridge) is Vimy a good sized town. Built of red tile. Not a house destroyed. The Br. have not shelled it. Farther away to the left is Tens – built of red tile. Smoke coming from the chimneys indicate that mines are still in operation. One can see for miles over the country. One appears to look right into the mouths of the German guns on the plain below. All the front lines have been withdrawn or blown up.

At 4pm – report came in that two of our platoons had pushed forward & occupied Bracken Trench with little opposition. Report sniping from Blonter Trench 400 yards in front and close to Vimy town. Other platoons moving up to occupy new position.

I wonder if my friends of civil life would \_\_\_\_\_\_ me if they met me today. I looked up at myself in a glass this pm and I guess I am about as tough looking as any of them. Lack of sleep – have not washed for 4 days (water too scarce & besides we have no extra helmets) five days growth of beard – and mud all over me. I could pass for 40 today.

9pm. Went out with Frank to front line in La Folie wood to see Lt. Loves shot through abdomen. In bad shape. Covered with mud and wet through. Had been lying out for hours. Very dark. Was hit on nose by small piece of shrapnel – jut took a little skin off. Coming back got \_\_\_\_\_\_ terrible. Got in to some shell holes half full of water. Fell in the mud and got nicely mussed up. Run across scottie bringing in some of our relief & he directed me. No sleep tonight. Relieved by 43rd at 3:30 am . Capt. Bill Terrible trip out. Through the mud. One of my med not stuck & had to be pulled out of a working party. Two of our pack mules got stuck & had to be dug out. One on our own big guns began dropping shells near us. Went to Rear H.Q in Grange Tunnel & spent the rest of the morning. Was asleep before I was lying down 3 min – mud & all.

Apr. 13th/1917 – M.G.S Aid Post. Very quiet. Padry with me. Tens reported burning. Mines being blown up.

3:31pm. Padre & I walked out over the ground that \_\_\_\_\_ days ago was out front & no man’s land. It seemed strange that not a shot was fired – not a shell dropped. The enemy must be pulling out their guns for we have heard no guns since morning on out front.

5 pm – One of our Aeroplanes brought down and 4 Fritz little red devils brought down in flames.

7pm. Our troops have passed in to Vimy \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ opposition news from south good.

April 14 – M.G.S this am. Can. Troops have advanced to within a mile of Tens. Fritz still retreating. Our men are now about 4 miles in front of us.

8pm. Villers au Bois. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ this am at 2. Myself and stall almost asphyxiated with gas from “fas engine” I had worse dose and keeled over in dug out. Had hard time making trip out. Am going to be not. Am lousy again.

April 15/17 – Villers au Bois. Resting all day. Two officers for West Kents had dinner with us tonight. Raining.

April 16/17 – Villers au Bois. Big sick parade this am. Bath & change in pm. Very heavy bombardment last night.

April 21st Grange Tunnel. At 6:30 last night – got work that Br. was to move up to the front at 12 mid night. No idea what for. Had heavy march. It was as dark as a black cat. The only way I could see the man in front of one was the flashes of our guns. Bumped in to him several times & at others when a flash would come I would find myself 15 feet behind. Pack mules would get in around us – crowding us off the road. Arrived at day light. Staying H.Q end of tunnel. Aid post in a little spur. 8 by 3’. Fritz puts very few shells over here now.

Apr. 29/17 Royal Victoria Infirmary Newcastle on Tyne. Now that I have got over here and got nicely settled down in a nice big hospital with everything so peaceful about & every comfort & cheer possible at hand I shall try to write down the happening of April 24 and succeeding days.

April 24 was a beautiful warm bright spring day. All day long – Aeroplanes were flying about and every few minutes an air fight took place & the pats had orders to take over the front line. An indefinite line out on Douai Plain some 3 miles beyond Vimy Ridge. The Hun did not know where this line was & consequently did not shell it. But he did know where his old dugouts etc. are & shelled them continuously. Out \_\_\_ was to start over the dirge for the relief at dusk but some company commander with more courage than judgement led his co. down the western slope of the ridge before sundown. Fritz saw them & opened up on them & from then on things were rather unhealthy on Douai Plain. I dressed some of our lads who were hit. H.Q. were divided into two portions. One of them consisting of the Col. – Capt. Chattell – Padre Nolan & their details went to the right and our party consisting of Major Weaver – Padre – Mr. Williams & myself with our respective squads – to the left. We got over the ridge without losing any of our men. We rested for a few minutes in a shell hole. We made out the old water tank beyond the Tens Arras road & made for the right of it but it was impossible to go on for the enemy was shelling the road heavily with heavy stuff. After a few min he switched his guns in our direction & we made for the road. We all got across safely but we were no sooner across that he shifted back to the road again.

Wounded

It was a beautiful evening in the latter part of April 1917. I stood at the entrance to Grange tunnel in France and gazed away across the crater and the crest of Vimy Ridge, beyond which the sun was sinking, to La Folie Woods & the Pimple. All about me was destruction. The ground was pitted with shell holes, torn and churned. The few blades of grass that struggled for life among the shell holes were discoloured a sickly yellow. Dirty green water stagnated in the holes. Old rifles, bayonets, bombs, unexploded shells, bully beef tins, and tangled masses of barbed wire littered the ground. Here and there a skeleton with the French Blue, the British Khaki, or the German Grey unifors still covering the frames of what were once living active men. Rats scurried among the sand bags, squealing ready to do their nightly rounds of scavenger work. The heavy odours of explosives, decay, and stagnation were in the air. Shells were bursting along the crest of the ridge – but where I stood everything was quiet.

A few days ago this had been “No-man’s land.” That was before the Canadian Troops had captured the Ridge on April 9th. To-day the most of the bodies of our gallant boys in Khaki who had stormed the Ridge – and the gallant boys in grey who had defended it had been reverently buried.

After the Vimy Show we had gone back for a rest. To-night we were going in to the line again. The front line had moved forward, during our absence and was not some two kilometers beyond the crest of the Ridge. Out beyond Vimy Village & the Tens Arras Road. We were waiting for darkness to come before passing down over the ridge to Douai Plain.

The enemy knew every foot of this new territory we had gained. He knew every road- every dugout and every path, and he was a methodical fellow in his shelling to-night. He kept up a continuous bombardment of all the roads.

I was medical officer of the \_\_\_ battalion. Our battalion lost several men, while passing down over the Ridge. It took me some time to dress the wounded, and see them on their way to the field ambulance.

Major Wrauer, second in command of the battalion, and a man of sterling qualities both as a gentleman and a soldier; Lt. Williams, machine gun officer, a boy just out of school and the Padre, who had seen many years in the Klondike country – remained with me until I had completed my dressings. We eventually found our way to the new location of our battalion Head Quarters, a short distance beyond the Tens Arras road. There we picked up a guide and then continued on to the frontline.

Among my most treasured souveniers of the war is a “Diary” which I kept. It is tattered and soiled, and some of the writing hard to make out. I shall now copy from this old book this part of it having been written while I was a patient in hospital a few days later.

“We leave H.Q. Dugout and turn to our right. It is very dark. The night air smells good after the heavy air in the dugout. There is very little shelling at present –a few H.E’s are cresting over to our left, and very light go up at intervals. Out guide leads the way and we follow in single file – no one speaking – for we are not far from the post. There is no path, but few shell holes in this area. I am all twisted around and don’t know what direction I am going but those guides seem to know by instinct just where to go. We have gone, about 300 yards, when out of the darkness ahead comes the command “Halt! Who goes there.” The major explains.

An artillery Sargent advances – he tells us that a field battery has been sneaked up since dark, and are now in position. They have orders to “stand to” and be ready to shoot point blank. He explains that we can not advance further. There is nothing to do but wait. Everything is very still, unnaturally so. The occasional tat-tat-tat of a machine gun down towards the front being the only sound. Suddenly the sky is full of a beautiful display of many coloured lights – just from out lines and then from the enemys. The S.O.S. to the artillery. For a few moments everything is still – then overhead we hear the whoosh of our large shells and almost at once we see them bursting in the enemy lines. We stand watching this display when “Hell” breaks loose where we are standing. Shells burst on all sides, like rats we scurry for shelter. Williams and I get in to the same shell hole.

It is quite a small one and is half full of dirty green water. We lie on appropriate sides with our legs drawn up to our bodies to keep them out of the water. Even then our heads & shoulders are above ground. The shells are dropping uncomfortably close. In the light form the flares I can see Williams. He is like a school boy – a broad grin still on his face. These is a terrific crash to our right. We are showered with chunks of earth which splash into the water. Williams is still grinning” we’ll often think of to-night when we get back to Canada –Doc.” I am not feeling comfortable. My wind is pretty badly up. Another crash to our left – more earth splashes into the water. A hard object bounces off of my “tin hat” – probably only a pebble- but it feels like a brick. “Well \_\_\_\_\_\_\_water or no water I’m getting down” I let myself slide down into the cold, slimy water. It rises about my lips, but my head disappears below the ground. I feel safer. “That’s not a bad idea Doc. I am go \_\_\_\_” The world comes to an end. A great weight presses me down into the water. I do not lose consciousness but my whole system is numbed. I have a peculiar sensation in my back – just under my shoulder blade, as though someone squirted a stream of cold water on the bare skin. I hear no sound of an explosion (note a 5.9 exploded eight feet from our shell hole) I feel so tired, I relax and also lower into the water. I feel no pain. I hear noises. They seem to come from a long way off. I feel myself being pulled up out of the water, but I cannot help, I am limp. I am pulled to an up-right position, I feel the warm blood running down my back, down my legs. Then I hear a sound splash, splash, splash. I know at once what it is. It is blood. A large stream being pumped out with each heartbeat. The anatomy of the chest as I had learned it in the old dissecting room at university flashes before my mind. There is only one vessel in that region which can throw out such a large stream – and the injury of that vessel means death in a few seconds. I know that I have but a few seconds to live. I am as certain of that fact as I have ever been of anything in my life. A wonderful change comes over me. My mind clears. I see and hear my faithful batman and dresser encouraging me. “It’s no use boys, I’m finished – beat it out of here” I have no fear. The shells are still crashing close to us, but they hold no more terror for me. I think of my wife and little son. I find myself hoping they will not grieve too much. I wish I could tell them how easy this thing is. I think of my brothers and sisters. My only thought is for home being left behind.

My boys haul me from the hole. They get me between them. One of my arms over each of their shoulders and half drag – half carry me. The splash splash ceases but still the warm blood runs down my back. I ask about Williams and am told he will be alright. I ask about Wrauer and am told he is wounded and has gone on ahead.

Time is passing – I am not getting weaker as I should be – my legs feel stronger. I feel my own pulse. It is racing – but is strong and steady. I try to reason this out. I realize with somewhat of a shock that I am not going to die. Then everything changes again. The bursting shells become more terrifying that ever. I am thinking of myself again, and that first call of primitive man – self-preservation. I exert all of my will power, I try to control myself when a high explosive shell bursts within a few feet of me, the concussion is so great that it upsets the whole nervous mechanism of the human system. My wound is paining slightly but this is not bothering me much, but I am badly shaken by the concussion. The distance to that dug out seems intermissable, but my two faithful boys keep telling me, we will soon be there. I see the Major. He is being dressed. He assures me, he is all right. But where is Williams? Then my batman tells me – “He is still out in the shell hole – dead. Head almost severed from the body. He must have had his head above the shell hole.” Never knew what hit him. Yes poor Williams had been one second late in getting down. That explains that splash, splash, in the green shell hole water. It was his life blood, not mine.

That is all there is to tell. I could go on with a description of my trip back, my weeks in hospital, recovery and return to duty. But this does not matter, it is the same as any one out of thousands can tell you.

This little account of my experience is not written to record an incident in my life. It is written to principally for the mothers, who, during those trying days, years ago, had the great misfortune to receive that curt message “we are sorry to inform you, that your son was “killed in action” Ever so many years after, I hope some mother, who received this message, may get some comfort from it, and realize, that her dear one……