

Lt. L.V. Shier 20th Battalion, Canadians, B.E.F. Transcription Aug. 24, 1917- Sept. 12, 1918

[77-022](#)

Aug. 17

Warned for France while at OTB Seaford.

Aug. 18

Back to Sandling to 5th Reserve

Aug. 19 - 20

Leave to London

Aug. 24

Left for France from Folkestone at 12.15 p.m. We had a very rough passage and most of those on board were sick. I was not sick but did not feel any too well. Landed at Boulogne at 2:45 p.m. Our baggage was put into motor lorries and we also got in and were taken about 3 miles or so out to Ostrohove camp which is only one mile from Boulogne. We lived five in a tent. In our tent we had Dunkley, Stewart, Vansickel, Davies, and myself. The 5th Reserve officers on the Draft are -

15th -- Twomey, Davies, Reid, Ferguson, Skene, Skinner, D'esterne, Wagar, Brokenshire, Dunn, Phillips.

20th Dunkley, Smith, Stewart, Vansickel, and myself.

At Boulogne we saw a number of Hun prisoners at work. Some appeared young but others were pretty husky specimens. Boulogne itself was a very dirty joint and everything in it seemed dirty. The streets were filthy.

Aug. 25

Left Ostrohove camp for Etaples where the Canadian Base is situated. We left at 3.25 and it took us 90 minutes to run 15 miles. We reported to the 2nd CIBD

The French trains are amusing. They just creep along but they are continually whistling and you would think they were travelling at 60 miles an hour. They have very shrill whistles.

We could not get dinner at the Base Depot so we went down to the officers club in Etaples where we had a fairly good dinner. Etaples is a quiet place and there was nothing to do there.

Aug. 26

Issued with a steel helmet, box respirator and P.H. Helmet [Ed. Another type of gasmask] and rained most of the day.

Aug. 27

Out to the "Bull-Ring" where we spent a day in gas drills ect. Got a good soaking when it started to rain. Warned to go up to the front to the 15th Battalion with Vansickel. D'Esteene and Skinner were to go to the 20th Dunk [Ed. possibly Dunkley's nickname] goes to the 20th and Stewart and Smith to the Entrenching Battalion

Aug. 29

Left Etaples for Calonne-Ricouart at 8.25 in the morning. Passed through St. Pol, Hesdin and Remies. Arrived Calonne at 2 p.m. Reported to town mayor there and were assigned billets. This is a reinforcement Camp for Canadians.

Was given an excellent billet in a fairly new house and with a nice family. Billeted with - Henri Morival No. 7 Fosse. G. Colonne-Ricouart.

Vansickel and I slept together in a bed with three mattresses on it. There were two nice daughters there and one could a little English. The Father could also speak a little English and I could a little French so with the aid of a French English dictionary we got along fine.

Aug. 30

Received movement order to proceed to the 15th Battalion with Vansickle and D'Esterne and Skinner were to come to the 20th Battalion. The four of us got permission however to go over to Brinay to the 1st Canadian Division Headquarters. There we saw Major Bennett who too the responsibility on his own shoulders to send us to our proper Battalions. Lt. Col. Scott, a chaplain, made us all have a lunch before leaving. In the Div. Hq. I met Sgt. Willmott who used to go Harbord. He gave me a good map. He also told me that Ivan had passed through there, just the day previous on his way back to the front. Vansickle and I started out to walk the 10 or 12 miles to the Villers-aux-Bois

We started for Houdain and after walking for a mile got a lift as far as Renchicourt. We had walked another $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile when a staff colonel came along in a staff car and took us as far as Villers-Cattel. We walked from there to Camblain-l'Abbé, when we had some lunch in an [estaminet]. Got another lift from there to Villers-aux-Bois in a A.S.C lorrie. Assigned to No. 2 coy. Dunk is in No. 1 coy. My company commander is Major Keith Larry Speirs, Alan Greig and McRae are also in this company. Also Davey Booth.

There are a great many old 5th Reserve officers here.

A conference and reception at the Brigade Headquarters where they had a fine spread of eats. Brigadier General Rennie is the Brig.

We have a company mess and all the coy. officers sleep in the same hut. This village is in ruins but I don't know whether it was battered in this war or in 1870. The towers of Mont. St. Eloy are visible over the trees. The guns can only be heard occasionally but the flashes of the big guns can easily be seen. Vimy and Souchey are only a short distance from here.

Aug. 31

Lieut. Gen. Currie the Corps Commander payed an informal visit to the Brigade. this a.m. He told us that in the Lens scrap the Huns had counter-attacked 35 times but did not succeed in recovering any ground. He also said that 5 German divisions have been knocked out of the line. The German casualties were about 3-1.

Night of Sept. 2-3

There was heavy firing all evening and a Hun plane came well over our lines. About midnight a very heavy bombardment took place in an easterly direction.

Sept. 3

It has been a fine day and there was great aerial activity. I counted 13 English balloons in the air at one time. The Huns shelled one and the two observers had to leave by means of a parachute. Several Hun machines got even farther behind the lines than this. The Anti-Aircraft did not seem to be able to get near them. They were directly overhead several times.

Sept. 5

Capt. Keith, Dunkley, Allen Greg, Booth, and I walked over to Lorette ridge. From there we could look over a large part of the Lens sector. Lens and a number of suburbs could be seen through the glasses. The Huns were dropping heavy shells into Liévin at intervals of about 3 minutes.

Sept. 13

Orders to get ready to move have arrived. We probably leave tomorrow. Ivan came down from La Tangette to see me. We had a great old talk together after not meeting for 16 months or more.

Sept. 15

I came up with advanced party from B coy, consisting of one NCO from each platoon. We located our position, BOAT trench, on the forward slopes of Vimy ridge after a good deal of prowling around. We came up by La Tangette where our transport lines are situated. BOAT trench was occupied so we had to take over DO's in BEANO trench. We then went back to La Tangette to meet the Coy and guide the platoons in. On the way back I passed old Chuck Hesson's grave of the Ridge. It is along side the plank road towards Givenchy.

[Ed. Brigade Reserve written on the margin]

Sept. 16

Fine day (Sunday) and we had a fine time watching the Artillery fire through glasses. Quiet here, I had my first experience with a working party at night. McRae and I had to take 100 men from B coy. Bochan of A coy was in charge. Our job was to fill in shell holes along the road by Vimy station. We got back about midnight. There was no shelling.

Sept. 17

Another fine day. Had fine observation from O.P. on the hill. Fritz shelled Givenchy road to our left.

Sept. 18

Fritz shelled trenches to our right with heavy stuff. He was evidently after the batteries. In the afternoon, Cronk Medhurst and I went up to the front line to the right of Avion and in front of Mericourt. The 18th were in and the line was very quiet. It was quite a surprise to me that everything was so peaceful up there. They were shelling Avion on our left.

Sept. 19

Tramped all over former German lines looking for D.O.'s etc. I was down one tunnel 80 ft. below the ground. Found all kinds of relics. Fairly quiet all day.

Sep. 20

We were relieved at 8.30 p.m. by the 25th we moved back to back to Camblain-l'Abbé where we arrived at 2 a.m. Attack by British at Ypres. [Ed. Divisional Reserve written on the margin]

Sept. 21

Left at 1.30 p.m. with Majors Ingles, Turner, and Bertram and Capts. Nicholls and Ironsides for Perines to attend the First Annual Canadian Corps Rifle Meet. We traveled by motor lorry and it was beautiful ride through real France. British advanced at Ypres about a mile.

Sept. 22

Fired matches 1,2, and 3 today. Only did fair. 20th Officers had a dinner in estament. Some party. Majors Ingles, Turner and Bertram, Captains Nicholls, and Ironsides, Lieuts. Shier, Frost and Holland.

Sept. 26

Returned to Battalion at Camblain-l'Abbé. Battalion left Camblain-l'Abbé at 5 p.m. and we moved up to Neville St. Vaast into Divisional support. [Eds. Divisional Support denoted on margin]

Sept. 27

Went over tapes for the first time. The observation balloons had an exciting time. At 5.25 a Hun plane attacked the Balloon at La Tangette and brought it down in flames. The Hun got away. At 7 p.m. the balloon at Ablain-Saint-Nazaire was attacked and brought down in flames but this time the Hun was S.O.L. for he was cut off and forced down by four of our scouts. He came down somewhere near Berthonval woods.

Oct. 2

Relieved 29th Battalion in front line. B Coy occupied the support trench (Reserve Trench) [Eds. Front line 6 days noted on margin]

Oct. 5

Started to rain and trench have been turned into a stream. It is very muddy.

Oct. 8

Relieved by 21st Battalion. Our time in the front was very quiet and we had no casualties. "C" Coy had two men wounded. Headquarters was heavily bombarded and force to move from La Chandrie wood.

Major Marr, Capt. Ross and several batmen were buried in D.O.[dug out] for some hours but were not seriously hurt though Marr has made Blighty.

Our trip back to Bde. support on Vimy ridge was the worst experience I ever had. The rain came down in torrents and was driven straight into our face by a very strong gale. The mud was ankle deep and it was black as pitch. It took us over 3 hours to go a little more there 2 miles.

When we reached our locality we found that there was no D.O and it was 4 a.m. before we got to sleep. Believe me I appreciated the rum [] that morning. Our Hats (coy) was in the cellar of an old school.[Ed. "Brigade Support" written in margin]

Oct. 10

Relieved by 27th Battalion and we moved back into Divisional Reserve at Villers-aux-Bois just when being relieved Fritz started a bombardment on our right and left. The 27th had some casualties coming in but the shelling stopped just long enough for us to get past.

Tours

Sept. 15-20 Bde. Reserve - 6 Days

Sept. 21-26. Divisional Reserve - 6 Days

Sept 27- Oct. 2 Divisional Support - 6 Days

Oct. 3 - Oct. 8 Front Line - 6 Days

Oct. 9 - Oct. 10 Bde. Support - 2 Days

Oct. 11 - Oct. 15 Divisional Reserve - 6 Days

Oct. 15

Off to Belgium. This morning the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade left Villers-aux-Bois on its march to Belgium. We left at 9 am. Our route is - V aux B, Grand Servins, Fresincourt, Lebruve, La Comte, to Ourton where we stay for the night. It was a march of about 18 k and we arrived at Ourton about 4.15 pm. The day was fine throughout and the roads were in fair condition so the marching was not too hard. Greeg and I are in excellent billets and the others are the same. The bed looks very inviting and though it is just 8 o'clock I am going to hop in as soon I have I have washed my feet. Our gear is in a very clean place and mademoiselle certainly knows how to fry potatoes. Tres bon!

There is on thing peculiar to most French houses in country districts- they are built in the form of a hollow square with the house occupying one side and the farm buildings and the sheds occupying the remaining three sides. The centre is taken up a manure heap. [Ed. illustrated diagram of French Farms]

Oct. 20

Still at Ourton. Today the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade was inspected by Gen. Horne the Army Commander. It was sort of a farewell visit as the Canadian Corps is leaving his command for a while at least. It was fine day and it was an inspiring sight to see the four battalions give the general salute.

The weather has been generally fine for the last week.

Oct. 21

This is the first anniversary of my departure from Toronto, We are still at Ourton.

Oct. 24

We got up this morning at 2 a.m. and marched out of Ourton at 4.45 a.m. while it was still very dark. There was something strange and new about it that impressed me. We knew we were going to Belgium probably to be thrown straight into the thickest of the fiercest battle of the war. Our company lined up on the road while the rumbling limbers passed behind them. You would naturally expect grouching and grumbling from the men but instead they all seemed quite cheerful, sang old songs of home. Occasionally a match would flare up as a cigarette or pipe was lighted showing the cheerful countenances of the men for a brief instant. They all seemed anxious to be off. At last the Col. gave the word and the battalion stepped off to the tune our Regimental march.

The nine mile march to Ligny Station was without incident other than when B coy took the wrong road for about a mile. We arrived there about 8.40 and entrained about 9 a.m. the men were herded into ordinary box cars marked

Hommes 40

Chevaux 8

by Allen Greey

Our train pulled out at 10.10 The journey of 72K (45 miles) was not exciting the train just crawled along and it was 2.45 before the train reached Hazebrouck. From there we marched on to a place called Godenwaerovelde where we detrained at 4.50 p.m.

They do strange things in the army which the mind of the subordinate are quite unaccountable e.g. we moved from V-aux-B to Ourton, a distance of 20 km (12 ½ miles). We stayed there 8 days then we moved south 14km (8 ¾ miles) to Ligny Station. Where as Ligny was closer to V-aux-B than Ourton. [Ed. Drawing inserted]

When we reached Godwaersveled we found we had to march back 8 km (5 miles) to our billets which were only 2 Km from Calstie which we passed on the way from Hazebrouck to Godewaersvelde. WHY did we not get off Ceastre? Can't figure it out. During this march I perceived what it was like walking on paved roads for the first time. These roads are built of stone bricks which are anything but well fitted. It is very hard on the feet. Finally we reached our destination and the men were shown their billets in a hay loft. They were considerably more comfortable than our which were on the stone floor of the kitchen. However I was so tired that I could have slept almost anyplace. Before returning we had Madame cook up some eggs and chips which were tres bon.

We are not yet in Belgium but within some 8 miles of the border.

Oct. 25 - 28

Our stay at Caestre was uneventful on the morning of the 26th the 3rd and the 4th Division went over in front of Passchendale. The 4th got their objectives but the 3rd were held up. I heard that the 58th had heavy casualties. [Ed. Margin note that Archie Brown in 58th was wounded]

At midnight on the 28th-29th we received word that we could leave at 4.45 a.m. the morning of the 29th. Capt. Fiskens and Davey Booth rejoined the company at Caestre.

Oct. 29

We arose at 3am and paraded at 4:45. The Battalion entrained at Caestre somewhere about 8am. After about an hour on the train we detrained just east of Ypres. From there we marched to Potijze. It was my first view of the famous city of Ypres. There is not an undamaged house in a city which formally had a population of 17,500. Everything was in ruins. We relieved the 19th Battalion who had been doing working parties. Saw a tank for the first time.

Oct. 30

Went out on my first working party at 10 am. We had to carry up planks for building a road near Spree Farm. We were right in the midst of the guns. Fritz dropped a number of shells near us but we had no casualties. The 49th and the P.P.C.L.I. (Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry) went over this morning. The 49th got badly cut up by Machine Gun fire from pillboxes. I saw my first casualties at the dressing station. There were hundreds.

It would be impossible for me to adequately describe the desolation of this country in the wake of our advance. The ground is one mass of water filled shell holes stretching away to the east where there are several ridges which we have already taken. Here and there a few broken off tree stumps show where a wood once stood. Dotted over the landscape are broken down "pillboxes" crushed by our barrage. Some of the least damaged are used as dressing stations for our troops. They are made of reinforced concrete.

Half a dozen "tanks" stranded in the mud show where the German gunners obtained direct hits. Evidently the tanks had a bad time of it there. I examined one. It's made of steel ½ inch thick and the whole interior seemed to be filled with powerful motors. To me they seemed like some huge amphibians stranded high and dry out of their element.

In a slight depression between two of the "ridges" are our lighter guns, the 18 pounders and the 4.5 pounders. These are arranged in 5 or 6 rows 50 or 75 yards apart stretching away as far as the eye can see. The heavier guns, 6", 8.4, 9.2" howitzers are nearly as numerous and are ranged in depth according to their size. There seems to be no limit to the number of guns.

Farther back still are rows of even heavier guns, 12 and 15 inch howitzers and long range Naval guns. There are not just odd guns here and there but regular batteries of them.

The amount of material is appalling. Shells of all sizes both ???, wire --- everything without limit going backwards and forwards from the various dumps are streams of pack mules carrying up shells to the guns.

Hundred of men are working night and day building and extending the roads, laying both [] and carrying up material.

Overhead are hundreds of our planes directing the fire of the artillery and taking photographs behind the lines. Observation balloons are also very numerous. I counted 20 of ours up to-day.

Occasionally the Huns pull off a powerful bombing and reconnaissance raid consisting of about 2 Gothas and 18 scouts.

Several Heinie prisoners came down. One who was badly wounded in the head was assisted along by one of our boys who was less seriously wounded. A little later I saw two unwounded Germans helping a Canadian back to the hospital.

It rained most of the day and made everyone feel miserable.

Oct. 31

Just one ago to-day I landed in England with the 170th Battalion. To celebrate the occasion Fritz sent over numerous bombing aeroplanes from 8.30 p.m. on. They certainly made things uncomfortable in this vicinity.

Nov. 1, 1917

On another working party to-day to Spree Farm. Had several shell light pretty close, no casualties. A Coy had 1 killed and three wounded this morning.

Nov. 2

Took a party of 66 men down to Poperinghe to Canadian Corps railhead depot. C.S.M. Dunn retained there. The Battalion went into Divisional Reserve to-night. Capt. Fiske and Lieutenant Spiers, Greey and McRae took in B Coy. Cronk, Dave Booth, and I stayed out.

Dunk went in with A Coy and was wounded in the arm going into the line. As far as I came to learn it was not serious.

The Huns counter-attacked against the 21st and penetrated lines in a couple of places but were driven out. I stayed at Poperinghe over night. This place suffered severely from the bombing raid of Oct. 31st.

Nov. 3

This has been a dull day. Every time a barrage opens up I feel that our men are getting shelled. Every time an S.O.S goes I feel that the Huns are attacking them. It is rotten being back at the transport lines feeling continually that your friends are having a bad time of it and that probably some have been hit. I guess it is worse up the line though than at the T. lines.

Nov. 4

Over to Poperinghe for the various messes.

Nov. 5

Battalion came out of the line this morning at 6 a.m. Our company had seven casualties and the whole Battalion had 53. A Coy suffered the heaviest with 29 casualties. At 8.30 a.m we moved off and marched to Ypres where we entrained at 11 o'clock. The train journey was only a short one to Brandhoek. We marched from there to Toronto camp about a mile away. Every one who had been in the line was dead tired after having no sleep for 3 days and spent most of the remainder of the day in sleeping, scarcely getting up long enough to eat. It is fine to be away out of the sound and range of the guns for a while. Even the T. lines were not healthy and several heavy shells fell among the tents.

Nov. 6

Canadians captured Passchendaele and some 200 prisoners. The 27th Battalion of the 6th Brigade actually took the village. Fritz did not counter attack.

Nov. 7

Ivan came over to see me from their horse lines near Toronto Camp.

Nov. 8

Left Brandhoek at 8 a.m. and took train to Ypres. Marched to Potijze for lunch. After lunch A and B companies were outfitted with operation equipment which included:

1 Bomb

2 Water bottles

2 Days Rations

S.O.S. Grenades

Rifle

Ground Flares

2 20 rds S.A.H.

2 Sandbags

Socks, Etc.

They moved off to relieve the 22nd about 2.30 p.m. The same four officers took in B Coy. It was certainly rotten to see them go knowing that they were going over the top and that some would never come back.

Nov. 9

C and D Coys went into the line to-day. Reported Major Turner O.C. of A coy was founded. Fritz did a lot of bombing at night.

Nov. 10

The 20th Battalion went over the top this a.m. The barrage to the left of them has continued more or less all day. This is on the front of the 1st Division and 22nd Corps. It is said the 20th got all objectives. Their task was to round off the right Flank of the 1st Division attack 4 p.m. still no news of the attack. It has rained all day and the guns are still pounding. This suspense is fierce. Latest reports are that the 20th have gained all objectives.

At 10 p.m. I was warned to proceed to the Seine dump at 6 a.m. with all available officers and men to act as reinforcements.

Nov. 11

Booth, Frost, and I moved off at 6.30 a.m. with about 45 O.R.'s. We went Seine via the Zonnebeke road and the mule track. The mule track was terrible. The mud in places was knee deep and the whole road was lined with dead horses and mules and very often dead men. Many men our and many were Germans. A little way off the track there was a pile of dead Huns. There were the first dead men I had seen. Right at the corner of the mule track and the Seine road there was a horse actually quartered by a shell. It certainly was not a healthy spot.

Upon reaching the dump we reported to the 21st and were instructed to make funkholes in an area pointed out. It was some job. It was almost impossible to dig for water oozed up after you had dug a foot or so. There was no protection from shell fire what so ever. We managed to keep out of the water by laying a floor of petroleum tins. A couple of stretchers supplied the roof.

During the afternoon and night a large number of whiz-bangs and high explosives and gas shells were fired through the night into our position making things very uncomfortable. Several 21st men were killed and another shelter holding two men was knocked in by a gas shell. I had my respirator on but when helping to get the men out I had to take it off and got a touch of the gas. It was just sufficient to turn my stomach and make my headache.

Nov. 12

At 12:30 a.m. D Coy arrived at Seine Dump after being relieved by the 58th. The other companies came in at intervals up till 6.30 a.m. It was pitiful to see A and B Coys come in 37 and 25 strong respectively. B Coy had the worst trip of all. When coming out some one had the company astray and instead of turning to the right at Passchendaele Church they ran into a German outpost which turned a Machine Gun on them and hit a couple of men, one of whom was killed. Mr. Greey got separated from the remainder and wandered around in no man's land with one man for an hour and a half. We had all give him up for lost when he showed up at the transport lines an hour or two after the Battalion. He was in an awful state covered with mud from head to foot and had lost his trench coat, revolver, water bottles, knives, maps, and worst of all his nerve. He had a bad experience and was shaking like a leaf but he still clung to a German helmet.

B Coy had 58 casualties. 7 killed, 12 missing, 33 wounded and 6 sick. Captain Fiskens the O.C. was one of the wounded.

The three O.C. Companies were hit. Major Turner of A in the leg. Captain Fiskens of B in the arm, and Lt. Heather seriously in the back. Major Bertram of D acted as O.C. Battalion but was not in front line.

The only other officer casualty was Lt. Newlands who had his back hurt a bit.

The mud was the worst enemy and several men died from exposure who could have been saved if it had be possible to get them out.

Nov. 13

Moved back to the Brandhoek by train on the way to the station several shells fell in Ypres and when we were entraining a number of Hun planes came over dropping bombs. At Brandhoek we went into Toronto Camp once more.

Nov. 14

Still at Brandhoek. Last night a long rang gun got busy and threw a number of shells over our heads. They sounded like express trains and the concussion was very heavy and could be felt Brandhoek.

Nov. 15

Took motor buses from Brandhoek to a place called Haverskerque. Had fairly good billets. I was very sick during the night.

Nov. 16

Moved from Haverskerque to Lozergharin where we had an excellent billet. We made this move also by motor bus. The last few days the Germans have been bombarding Passchendaele very heavily but all attacks were repulsed. The bombardment could be heard a long ways behind the lines.

Nov. 17

Moved from Lozengharin to Camblain-l'Abbé by motor bus once more. It was a long and tedious journey as the roads were crowded with 4th Division artillery moving south.

Nov. 20

Still at Camblain-l'Abbé. This morning (according to information received from Corps Hq situated here) the Third Army have advanced on a 10 mile front without artillery preparation with some 400 tanks in the front line near Cambrai.

9 p.m.: Latest reports say Third Army has advanced 5 miles on a ten mile front and the cavalry are still going. Sounds Good! Almost too good to be true.

10 p.m. Word has just come in that we go in the line tomorrow the 21st. I, Harvey, Stamford, Lang, Leonard, Brown, etc. joined Battalion at 1 am on the 19th - 20th.

Nov. 21

I got up at 5.30 and left at 7.30 a.m. with advanced party by motor bus which took us far as Les Tilleuls where we met our guides.

The Battalion arrived about 12.30 and took over from the 14th Yorks and Lawes in the support line in Canada and Hudson and Ottawa trenches. The trenches were in fine condition, well both matted and excellent shelters. They even had a canteen in Hudson trench.

Nov. 24

Our stay in support has been quite uneventful only one shell coming anyways close. The 20th exchanges places with the 21st in the front line in the morning.

At 5.30 p.m. I reported to Battalion Headquarters to proceed to Pernes on the course at the Canadian Corps School. I went down to the transport line at Au Riets corner in a ration limber which is anything but comfortable to ride in.

Nov. 25

Left transport lines at 10.20 and walked to Villers au Bois where we arrived at 12 noon. Met McKnight of the 26th who was also on his way to the course. This is the third course we have been on together. Crowborough, Hythe and Pernes. Took buses at Villers at 1 pm and arrived at Pernes about 4.15. I am posted to No. 5 platoon and No. 3 hut.

Nov. 26

Started right in with parades the first morning. Capt. Wilson is the O.C. B Coy and S.M. Smith is our N.C.O. instructor. The web belts have to be scrubbed and polished they are snow white. Parades start at 8.15 and last till noon. Then in the afternoon we work from 2 to 6 with an hour off between 4 and 5 for tea. The mess is excellent and the Nissan huts are quite comfortable.

Dec. 1

We have carried on all week with drills etc. and are now getting into the swing of it fairly well. The fellows in No. 3 hut are all very decent fellows and we have a very good time. Dinnie Sakes is in there and is usual "tight"

To-day McKnight, Turner, Sayers, Carey and I got leave and went to Bethune. Our train left at 12:45 and on our way to the station we dropped into the Hotel Nonore for lunch. The Madame and Mlle. there were anything but modest and were very free speakers. It cost the five of us just 2 Francs(xxx a piece) to go Bethune.

Bethune is a quite a large town with very good stores. There are large ordinance stores there. In regard to the ordinance we found we could not buy anything as they taking stock.

The town has been knocked about quite a bit by shells through it some miles behind the lines. We had dinner at the Hotel Paon d'or (the Golden Peacock) and left for camp at 1.30 p.m. by motor. The car cost us 100 Francs (20 a piece) the driver had to be back in town again by 9 p.m.

Dec. 4

Our Company was out wiring tonight. It was a rotten job for a number officers had consumed considerably more liquid refreshments than was good for them and consequently the affected had a double task to perform. The staff gave a repetition of the concert they gave Friday evening which was very good.

Dec. 6

Carey, Turner, McKnight and I had dinner at the Bequeart-Masset and had as pretty lively time. About twenty officers of the 116th were also there and had some party. Among other things they brought in a calf which they endeavored us to ride. As most of them found it hard to enough to stand on their own feet, to sit on a calf was almost impossible. The calf finally fell down exhausted and had to dragged out. The party finally broke up when G.S. Waggons called to take the 116th contingent home.

Dec. 7

This has been a hard day. First of all Champagne at night usually gives real pain in the morning. Then we had our first lesson in equitation and to give a green hand like myself it kept me pretty busy to stay on the horses back. I managed it someway or other though I felt pretty stiff and sore afterwards. At noon I played baseball and B Coy defeated C. In the afternoon we had drill and B.T. needless to I went to bed early.

Dec. 9

Church Service and Communion this a.m. afterwards our class had our second lesson in equitation which consisted in a 5 or 6 kilometer jaunt around the country. In the afternoon, we

went to Yvonne's for tea and then down to the "library" where we got information from the Madame. It was quite lively for a while.

Dinnie Sykes went to Bethune yesterday and got tight as usual. He got in bad with A.P.M. and is now under close arrest. I believe he drew his dirk. Yesterday, Curran one of the officers in our hut went to the Hospital with V.G.S. reducing our strength from 10 to 7.

Dec. 11

Our hut held a little dinner at the Bequant-Masset which was a great success. It cost us each about 38 Francs. (\$7.50). Those Present:

Lt. Hank'Aseltine (Pres), 2nd Battalion.

Lt. Beckett 14th Battalion

Lt. Turner 4th Battalion

Lt. Alexander 24th Battalion

Lt. Thompson 29th Battalion

Lt. Jackson 2nd C.M.R.

Lt. Barber Signals

Lt. Shier 20th Battalion

Dec. 12

Oh what a head! Champagne at night, real pain in the morning. "She ain't no rose." Sgt. Major Smith I guess was worse than we were.

Dec. 13

Equitation, cross country across 5 ditches, didn't fall off.

Dec. 20

Clary Spiers, Hospital V.D.G. (Venereal Disease, Gonorrhoea); Dave Booth, Hospital while on leave.

Dec. 22

Course ended Battalion arrived in Bailleul-les-Pernes just three kilometers away for months rest so I walked over in the Afternoon.

Dec. 25

Christmas Day! This is fine winter weather, plenty of snow and just cold enough to make you lively. Rose at 9.30 and after breakfast paid a few calls. At noon Cronk, Medhurst, Burns, Hopkins and I went down to Pernes and saw Georgette etc. We got back at 7 o'clock just in time for the Battalion dinner, all feeling rather happy.

The Battalion dinner was very good, hors'd'oeuvres, soup, turkey, pudding, pies, etc. Cronk & Greey pretty tight after the party they wanted to clean up on a number of Frenchmen. Cronk went home but Greey stayed up drinking rum with some Frenchmen most of the night.

Dec. 26

To-day our Coy had its X-mas dinner. We had a whole pig, plenty of potatoes, turnips and pudding. Every man had as much or more than he could eat and vowed it was the best dinner they had since joining the army.

In the evening there was a concert with three barrels of beer and free cigarettes. It was not a bad day on the whole. The total cost was about £ 1,000.00 made up as follows: Battalion R.F. 300 Coy 550 Coy officers 250.

1918

Jan. 1

Started off the New Year in rather bad humour. Took a bathing parade to Lieves 5 miles away for a bath but when we got there, found no clean clothing so it was a 10 mile march for nothing.

However the rest of the day was not too bad for through my French I secured two chickens for dinner and Hopkins and McRae brought back pies from Pernes so we had an excellent New Years Dinner.

Jan. 3

McRae went away on leave to-day just under 5 months. Leave is running wonderfully well at present.

Jan. 5

Spent the morning on parade. In the afternoon Hopkins and I went into Pernes for a few things. Nothing interesting happened.

Jan. 6

Special Day of Prayer throughout Empire. Though Sunday we were kept busy most of the day cleaning up for inspection by Gen. Burstall on Tuesday. Cronk, Burns and Hopkins went into Pernes and the two former got very drunk.

Jan. 7

Allen Greey's leave warrant arrived leaving me first on the leave list. My leave may be delayed for awhile for I am to attend 1st Army Sniping School Jan. 16th in preparation for becoming Battalion Scout officer.

Bailleul-les-Pernes the village we are billeted in is one of the worst I have seen. It a long rambling village built in a valley and the chief buildings are the Church and the school. The school master is also the mayor and while Les Enfants are having recess he busies himself with important municipal affairs such as writing out the tax bills.

The methods of living and working are very primitive and cleanliness extends no farther than the doorstep if it extends so far, The aforesaid doorstep being the urinal for the whole family.

The men work in the coal mines (this includes boys of 12 to 14) and the women do all the work about the house and it is surprising how much work they really can accomplish.

To thresh their grain they still used the old flails or a horse treadmill.

Jan. 8

Inspection postponed due to account of the snow storm.

Jan. 9

Inspected by Gen. Burstall. The Div. Com. After inspection, the best men in each platoon were picked out for a special leave and the worst man lost his leave.

Jan. 10

Walked over to Westrem to a lecture

Jan. 12

Brigade inspected by Gen. Currie, Corps Comand. at Westrem. A number of ribbons were handed out after the inspection. It was 2.30 p.m. before we got back.

Jan. 13

Attended lecture on artillery at Westrem. Visited Orlo Thompson at 19th Lavalley Norris called while I was away.

Jan. 14

Notified that we leave for the line tomorrow. Went over to Feslay for bath. Met Lavelle and brought him back with me for dinner.

Jan. 15

Left at 10 a.m. for Lozergharin where we arrived about 1.15 pm. It rained the whole time and we were all soaked by the time we got there.

Jan. 16

Battalion left for Estree-Cauchie but I started out for Lingham with my batman to attend the 1st Army, Sniping, Observation and Scouting School. After lifts in various G.S. Wagons, a French car, and a farmers cart, I arrived at my destination about 12:30 noon. It rained again to-day so it would be another bad day for the battalion.

Jan. 17

Started actual work at the school. Am billeted with a fellow named Smith of 85th Battalion.

Jan. 18

Spent part of day observing movement in a trench. Few of the officers from the school eat in the 15 (XV) Corp Reinforcement Camp mess.

Jan. 21

Practiced patrolling and crawled all over grounds on stomach till we awere all tired out. In the evening we had more crawling about against the NCOs.

Jan. 22

Very still sore to-day from playing, the snake. In afternoon we had long distance observing.

Jan. 23

Played football, Officers vs. N.C.O.s - N.C.O.s won 3-1. Had musketry this morning did fairly well.

Jan. 24

Night operation on range at 9 o'clock. Had an excellent dinner by each paying two Francs more.

Jan. 26

Nothing in particular did not go to Aire.

Jan. 27

Slept-in, in morning. Read in Afternoon.

Jan.28

Received report of Canadian Corps School and letter from Commanding Officer congratulating me.

Report -

Drill: G - has fair word of Command. Can handle rifle well and knows his drill.

B.T -- G Knows work and puts lots of "pep" into it.

M.R. - V.G. - Knows map road. Can use compass and can sketch.

Wiring- V.G - Did well and can instruct.

Musketry - G - A good shot and did good work all round.

Tactics - G -

Keeness and Behaviour - V.G. - Showed more than ordinary interest in work. Always well turned out, keen and energetic. A good sport and an excellent type of officer.

Some report

Jan. 20

Had staff up to dinner. The dinner was excellent and cost each of us 20 Francs.

The menu- Oysters on Half Shell Soup Filet of Sole Filet of Beef, peas and potatoes soufflé Roast chicken, chip potatoes Salad Wine pudding and fruit Jelly Coffee Cigars etc.

Jan. 31

Demonstration of amour piercing bullets. Evening patrol: officers vs. N.C.O's. This ended up in a melee on the centre of the plateau in which the N.C.O's proved victors owing to superior numbers.

Feb. 1

Last day of course. Examination in morning in which I got 91 out of 95. This was third highest mark. Off in the afternoon.

Feb. 2

Left Lingham and after a very round about journey finally reached Mount. St. Eloi at 3.30. The R.J.O. told me Battalion was at Villers-aux-Bois when I got there I found Battalion had moved in morning to Cellar Camp. Neuville St. Vasst. rejoined Battalion at Cellar Camp about 6 pm.

Feb. 4

Out with wiring party to La Chaudiere. The whole Vimy area is being heavily wired as far back as the ridge and in some places further. J.R. Beam was in charge of party and [xxxx] things up. We did not get back to camp until 6 a.m.

Feb. 5

Was appointed as Battalion Intelligence officer.

Feb. 6

Took a "Cook's tour" to Corps. counter battery Group HQ at Bouvigny in company with Capt. Benjamin Bde I.O. and the other three Battalion I.O.'s of Bde. We all rode. After the visit I rode over to Camblain-l'Abbé where I had dinner at the new officer's club.

After lunch I rode over to Chateau de L' Haute for a lecture on Intelligence. At the lecture I met Bruce Grey, Cliff Schell, Goodyear and Degruchy. Bruce is with 75th Battalion, Schell and Goodyear with 102nd Battalion and DeGrunchy 54th Battalion. Rode back to Neuville St. Vasst. Some class riding around with a mounted orderly but I was horribly sore after it. It was a beautiful day for riding.

Feb. 7

Went up the line with four scouts as HQ advance party to relieve 25th Battalion in the Mericourt sector. The Battalion HQ is in a quarry (Mont Forêt) in a tunnel which is lit by electric lights. The twenty fifth were going to pull of a raid so I went to the front line to look on. The wire was not cut so raid could not be pulled off.

Feb. 8

20th Battalion relieved 25th Battalion in Mericourt sector. I took out a patrol with Lieut. Newton and 10 O.R.s of B Coy. No man's land was quite quiet and there was no event of importance. The N.M.L. (No Man's Land) here is from 600 to 1000 yards across. Out from 10 p.m. to midnight.

Feb. 9

Capt. Keith returned from leave permitting me to go on leave. Turned over to him and prepared to leave following morning. A patrol of Battalion scouts went out and brought in a Bangalore Torpedo 30 feet long and 1 ½ inch in diameter. Left by Huns under our wire after unsuccessful raid on 25th or night of the 5th.

Feb. 10

Left Mont Forêt quarries (Front line Battalion H.Q) for leave. My train was due to leave Mont St. Eloi at 2 p.m. In order to gain time I cut across overland along New Brunswick road while

batteries on right were being shelled. Several shells fell close to Rd. and got my "wind up." I broke all records down that road. At Neuville St. Vast I changed my clothes and then beat it for Mont St. Eloi getting there in good time for leave train. I was grabbed for duty on the train and on arrival at Boulogne at 7.15 p.m. had to march a party of men to a billet about 300 yards from station. Put up at C.F.C. Officer's club where I had a good bath, haircut and sleep.

Feb. 11

Marched men to docks. 2 leave boats and hospital ships left Bolougne escorted by 3 destroyers at 11.30 a.m. It was very rough and many people on board were sick. You couldn't make me sick Blighty ahead however. Landed in Folkestone 1.40 p.m. and had lunch at Macstroni's. Got out my trunk with good uniform etc. and caught 3.05 train to London. Got room at Ivanhoe and went out to Streatham for a short time.

Feb. 12

Went out shopping most of the day. In the evening I had dinner at the Trocadero and though it was a meatless day, had an excellent dinner. After dinner I went to Arlette at the Shaftesbury Theatre.

Feb. 13

Went to Tower of London ordinance and bought a pair of glasses (£7-15-0). In the evening went out to the Steatham. Aida came over we spent the evening playing, singing, etc.

Feb. 14

Took Reeve [?] to Valentine in the evening. Went to Cave Tea rooms for supper with Major Gray and Dinnie Sykes. "Valentine" at St. James was very good.

Feb. 15

Left at 10.20 a.m. for the Isle of Wight from Victoria. Arrived Portsmouth at 12.30 and took small steamer across to Isle of Wight. Landed at Ryde about 2 pm. And took train from there to Ventnor where I Dunk at the station at 4 pm. Dunk looked little the worse for his wound. We took a cab from that station to the Arcoille, the home Miss McAdam at Bonchurch. The house is set part of the way up the hill in fine grounds and has a fine view over the Channel and Ventnor. Behind the house the ground rises steeply to a height of some 700 feet. The height plateau is called the Downs. Miss McAdam is a maiden lady of some 50 years but does not give a person the impression of being an "Old Maid." She has travelled a great deal and is an interesting speaker. Her home is fine.

Feb. 16

A fine day. Dunk and I took a long walk around Ventnor and Bonchurch. Everything was so beautiful and peaceful that the war seems to be non-existent. The remainder of the day we just sat around and talked. We had tea at the home of Mrs. Dr ---. In the evening we sat around a fine grate fire and played Victrola until 10 p.m. Then to bed.

Feb. 17

Sunday in the morning the three of us went to church in Ventnor. After a nice lunch, Dunk and I walked over the "Downs" to Shanklin. It was a fine day and the walk was great. On the way back we stopped at a house where we met Mss McAdam and had tea. The Chine and Shanklin was a pretty little spot also the "Lordship" arrived back with a wonderful appetite.

Feb. 18

Dunk and I got up early and took the 10.20 train to Brading to view the Roman Ville only the floors remain but these are well worth seeing. They are tessellated floors made with tiny coloured tiles - forming designs depicting various phases of life at that time. Despite the lapse of time most of the designs were quite clear and the colours were quite good. We then walked around to Sandown and on the way visited an old Manor house. We had lunch at Sandown and then took the train back to Ventnor. Spent the evening as usual.

Feb. 19

Took 10 a.m. train back to London and arrived there about 3 p.m. During my week end at the Isle of Wight, London had had three air raids. Quite good luck to miss them. Went to "Love in a Cottage" at the Globe. It was quite good.

Feb. 20

Went out to Reeve's[?] in the evening for a little music etc.

Feb. 24

Went to Frascatti's for a dinner which was not nearly as good as the Trocadero.

Feb. 22 Went to Alhambra, "The Bing boys on Broadway." (Violet Lorraine and George Robey) which was very good.

Feb. 23

Went to "The Boy" (Nellie Taylor), it was very good. Afterwards had tea at the cave. Met a chap from Seaford we met others on Piccadilly.

Feb. 24

Had lunch at the Elysee and enjoyed a very good lunch. Out to Reeve's [?] in the evening to say "Au revoir"

Feb. 25

Back to France. Left London at 7.35 a.m. and took boat from Folkestone at 1.30 p.m. Met Abe Pike who was on his way to the 19th. I was detailed for duty at Boulonge and had to march men to Ostrohove camp.

Feb. 26

Got up at 3.30 a.m. and marched men to station. Train left Boulonge at 5.45 a.m. and arrived at Mont St. Eloi at 11.30 p.m. Caught cars to Souchey and Battalion. Found 30 letters and 6 boxes waiting for me.

Feb. 27

Up the line to Support Lieves Relieved 24th Battalion.

Feb. 27 - March 3

In support during which time made trips up to the front line.

Mar. 3

Relieved 18th in front line night of 3-4th. I took out a patrol of myself and 4 scouts at night. Nothing was encountered.

Mar. 4 At 5:45 A.M.

Germans suddenly dropped a very heavy barrage on whole front and under cover of this, raided lines of 21st battalion on our left. 280 raiders penetrated 21st lines but secured no prisoners and were finally driven out leaving 1 wounded prisoner in hands of 21st.

The barrage was very heavy and our was equally so. At first it was thought that the big offensive had come. Had several shells fall within 15 yards. Got slightly gassed from a High Explosive gas shell. Felt punk for remainder of day. Same with others. Casualties very light: 20th battalion, 2 wounded and 21st 3 killed and 19 men wounded.

It was a good initiation for an American officer with us.

Sgt. Thomas took out patrol at night. I was up to front line.

Mar. 5

In the morning at 2.15 a.m. 21st put on a raid across Leu-Arras road with 2 officers and 65 O.R.'s. One prisoner secured. Casualties: 20th Bttn. 1 wounded, 21st Bttn. 2 killed and 10 wounded. Hun barrage weak.

Mar. 6

Relieved by 28th during night of 6-7th and took train back to Petit-Servins arriving about midnight.

Mar. 7

Spent the day cleaning up etc.

Mar. 9

Took a trip up to Bethune and back

Mar. 10

Over to conference at Brigade headquarters. Col. took battalion for a long route march after church service. Went over to see Bruce Gray but found he had gone to some rest camp.

Mar. 11

Received photos from Blanche and also some Canadian mail.

Mar. 12

At Tank lecture at Gouy-servins

Mar. 13

Went down to Bouvigney (Marqueffles Farm) and practiced with tanks.

Mar. 15

Draft of 198th men arrived

Mar. 16

Capt. Keith took half scout section and made a reconnaissance to Souchey while I took the other half and made a reconnaissance to Bully-Grenay and back.

Upon my return I found several letters from Blanche waiting for me.

March 17

Divine service and shortage parade. Afternoon C.O. inspected scout sections.

Mar. 18

On another reconnaissance up to Loos.

Had a surprise visit from Ivan who is on a gas course at Hersin. Went down to an establishment and had omelette and coffee and afterwards a bottle of Champagne. We had a great old talk and afterwards I walked part ways back him.

Mar. 19

Good weather broke at last and it has been raining all day.

Mar. 21

Opening of great German Offensive [ed. known as the Spring Offensive or Kaiserschlacht] on a front of 50 miles between rivers Oise and Seuse. No particulars.

Mar. 22

We are under one hours notice to move. Guns of all calibers are moving south.

Mar. 23

Still under one hours notice. No definite news received but plenty of rumours are going around. Paris has been shelled by a new long range gun. Also St. Pol., Aine, Lillers etc.

Mar. 24

After receiving several conflicting reports and messages during the night we left Petit-Servins in motor lorries at 7 am. We all expected to be rushed right into the battle but found our destination was Cubit Camp at Neuville St. Vast. In the afternoon I went forward on the ridge with a reconnoitering party to look over line about Oppy. From here we could see the success of the battle further south.

Mar. 25

Went forward with a battalion working party to dig new switch line trenches.

Mar. 26

On another reconnoitering trip around new trenches. On my return at 6 pm. I found the battalion all packed up and ready to move. Fred Junkin called over to see me but there was no time for talking. During all this time only fragmentary information has arrived regarding the Hun offensive and we are completely in the dark as to our move.

At 9 pm we started on our hike "down south" we don't know where. I was tired after reconnoitering trip in the afternoon, but it was nothing compared to this march in heavy marching order. We did 17 miles and finally stopped at a place called Berles-au-Bois, 6 or 7 kilometres behind the firing line at about 5 am. Needless to say I was tired.

Mar. 27

We finally got a place to sleep by breaking into a house whose occupants had left. We would have broken into anything to get a bit of sleep. However, we got no sleep as the Hun was attacking and we had to stand to.

In the afternoon I had to go on a reconnoitering trip on bicycle through Pausart, Monchy-au-Bois, Beauvilliers, Rovisnier.

This is a war of extremes all night from from hard and fast trench warfare to the openest of open warfare. [on margins is written: "I forgot to mention that this is my 22nd Birthday, Some Birthday!]

Mar. 28

During night and day we "stood to" several times but didn't actually move though we got no sleep. We became quite expert in packing up quickly. At 8 pm we actually got orders to move at 9 pm and there was more bustle and hurry but we didn't actually move until 12.30 midnight. We then marched to a place called Wailly near Arras where we arrived about dawn. After numerous holds and delays on account of traffic.

We immediately occupied old tenchers which was a great surprise as we thought we going into billets.

Mar. 29

Once more we got no sleep as I has to go forward reconnoitering once more. Relieved the 3rd division Imperials. These battalions had been in the line for 62 days and have been in the thick of the fight since the 21st. They were badly knocked about but had caused the Hun tremendous casualties (they said 20,000 killed). Our battalion relieved as follows: 1 coy will relieve Northumberland Fusiliers, 2 Coys will relieve the Royal Fusiliers, 1 Coy in support. It was same with 21st. We are in the front line just in front of Nuveille Vitasse.

Mar. 30

Nothing much to report except that there is no time for sleep or no place to sleep if there was time. It is quite a strain expecting an attack at any moment.

Mar. 31

Again nothing much to report except that I was all over our line in daylight. In the evening I received a cable from Blanche.

Apr. 1

We were relieved by 19th. In the middle of the relief somebody got the wind up and both sides put down a heavy barrage. I was at railway embankment in charge of guides when the show started at 9.40 pm. I think Fritz received more than he gave. Hdqs. came back to Wailly. Two letters from Blanch waiting for me.

Apr. 2

Nothing much doing except reconnoitering purple system [?]. More Canadian mail. Three of us are sleeping down in the cellar of an old house. It is not too bad as we have plenty of straw to lie on. It is wonderful the way the French people stick to their homes in spite of the shelling, Germans, and all. Some civilians are coming back into Wailly again.

Apr. 3

Nothing to report except more Canadian mail which of course was very welcome.

Apr. 4

Still quiet though an attack has been expected at any moment.

Apr. 5

This morning a party of 200 huns came over on 19th bttn. but none got as far as front line. During the night 4th Bde. relieved the 5th and moved back to Wailly huts.

April 6.

Went up reconnoitering with Major Andrews, Captain Keith etc.

Apr 7 - 9

In Div. Reserve at Wailly huts. During this time nothing very exciting happened. On the morning of the 9th the Huns started another offensive in La Basael district and captured Armentieres. It is said that the Portugese who were not killed, wounded or prisoners are now well on their way back to Portugal.

Night of Apr. 9th-10th

The 4th C.I.B. relieved 5th. The 20th relieved the 29th. I was left out as Capt. Keith took his turn in the line so I went back to Bellacourt with the transport.

Apr. 10 - 17th

Battalion in line. Nothing exciting except that 19th were called upon to assist the 1st King's Liverpools to clear their front line which a few Huns captured and held for a few hours. The casualties were very light this trip. The Hun is still pushing up north but is not making rapid progress. Battalion relieved night of 17th - 18th by 24th Battalion.

Apr. 18 - 20th

At Wailly huts in Div. Res. nothing exciting except reconnoisances of purple system. On the 19th, Medhurst and I went up to the 29th HQ. While on Mercatel Ficheux road we had the

pleasant experience of being sniped at with a 4.1. It hit about 5 yards away but fortunately we heard it coming and got down in time. Needless to say we didn't wait for him to fire again.

Night of 20th - 21st

We relieved the 29th Battalion in front of Neuville Vitasse. After relief I went over front line with Sgt. Thomas and three scouts.

Apr. 21

Sgt. Thomas, two scouts and myself reconnoitered an old trench in front of Neuville-Vitasse and heard enemy speaking and working within a few yards of us.

Apr. 22

Out on patrol again and we again heard noise of work and talking in same place.

Apr. 23

Out again with fighting patrol of Lieut. Bentley and 18 OR's to try and catch Hun post but they had a covering patrol and working party out in right of post and we could not approach it.

Apr. 24

Relieved by 19th. [Boehm] however took out a patrol and penetrated almost to Neuville-Vitasse when he was bombed by an enemy post and one man was killed and Boehm himself and two others were wounded, not severely however. Boehm's clothes evidently saved him for he had a tunic, leather jerkin, sweater coat and a number of shirts (said to be six). We went back to D.O.'s south of Agivny

Apr. 25 - 29th

In support with HQ in D.O. south of Agivny. During this time nothing exciting happened except a raid by 150 19th and 100 from the 21st into Neuville Vitasse. They cleaned up a number of posts and captured nine prisoners and 5 Machine Guns. This was on morning of 29th and lasted from 2 am to 2.20am.

Night of 29th - 30th

We moved aback into Div. Res. at Wailly huts being relived by 25th Battalion.

Apr. 30th - May 3rd

In Res. at Wailly huts where we carried out several reconnaissances of 2nd. Imp. Div. Area.

Night of May 3 - 4th

Battalion relieved 31st Battalion in front of Mercatel. Capt. Keith went this time and I remained out at Bellacourt with details.

May 5

Capt. Keith wounded last night and I was ordered to go up the line to replace him but just I was starting out I received message saying he had returned to duty. Abe Pike is here with 19th details and we went for a walk together this p.m.

May 6

Carried out reconnaissance as far as Adinfer. Lieut. Markham and three others including Arrins and House (scouts) were wounded in a small raid.

May 8

Capt. Nicholls killed by a shell in the front line along with three men. A great loss to the Battalion as he was an extremely efficient officer and one of the most popular in the Battalion.

May 15 - 16th

Battalion relieved by 24th in the front line and came back to Bellecourt.

May 17

Spent most our time out of the line on theoretical tactical manoeuvres.

May 20

Played 2nd Pioneers baseball but were beaten

May 21

Played T.M's with a stronger team and beat them 12-2. Pitched my first game of the year. Battalion did not go into line to-night as Hun was expected the following morning.

May 22

Hun attack did not materialize and we relieved the 29th Battalion in support with HQs at Aginy and Companies in Telegraph Hill switch.

May 28 - 29th

Relieved 19th in front line on right of Neuville-Vitasse. While at Aginy enemy shelled HQs and killed a Lewis gunner. He also gassed the area one night and caused several casualties.

May 30

Nothing in particular happened. Swan and I were sniped at by a Whizz-Bang on way to front line. We broke all records for remainder of the trip.

May 31

Nothing out of the ordinary happend we have had no casualties so far.

Jun. 1

Took out parties to cut lanes in our wire in preperation for the raid. Did it sucessfully without casualties.

Jun. 2 - 3rd

June 2nd, a day of final preparations. At 12.45 pm parties were guided into position about 150 yards from Hun trenches in the Maze (57c S10 N25a) S.E. of Neuville Vitasse. At 12.45 our barrage came down in fine style and covered practically two divisional frontages.

The Brigade on our left put up an artillery demonstration and the 21st on our left shot up green flares at our zero hour causing a barrage to fall on their front which did not cause any casualties however. In the meantime our men 150 strong were advancing under cover of our barrage which remained for 3 minutes on the Maze itself before forming a box barrage around 7. Our four parties got into the trenches with little opposition and remained there for 20 minutes bombing shelters and killing and capturing Huns. 2 wounded and 11 unwounded prisoners were captured and upwards to 30 Germans are believed to have been killed. In addition we captured 1 Machine Gun and 1 Fish Tail light trench mortar.

Our casualties were light being 2 killed and 17 wounded and only 4 of which were stretcher cases. Major Musgrove had command of the operation with HQs in the front line.

Capt. Smith of A coy was in command of the actual raiding party consisting of 4 parties of 30 men each, and a covering party of 30 men. The parties were in command of Lieuts. MacDonald and Beatty, A coy; And Lieut MacDonald and Bean J.R. of C. Coy; Sgt. Markham was in command of covering party.

The prisoners captured belonged to the 28th R.I.R. of the 185th Division and were of an average of 21 though most of them looked young for thier age.

At the same zero hour, the 29th Battalion second on our right pulled off a raid and secured 6 prionsers but had 30 casualties. Prisoners were of 161 R.I.R, 185th Division.

Jun. 3- 4th

Battalion relieved by 24th battalion I had to take parties out to repair gaps in wire made for the raid.

Jun. 4

Slept in all morning and in the afternoon went for a bath. Battalion in Divisional Reserve at Wailly Huts.

Jun. 6

Returned to B. Coy after months on HQ as Scout Officer. Played Indoor basball against 21st officers and were defeated 18 - 10

B Coy officer are now:

Capt. Cronk (on course)

Lieut. Spiers

Lieut. McRae

Lieut. Greey (P.W.P)

Lieut. Shier

Lieut. McLaren

Lieut. Gibson

Lieut. Pyper

Jun. 7

A.B.and C. Coy officers played HQ and D Coy officers indoor baseball. Great game the former team winning. "Wink" Irwin starred as umpire.

Jun. 8

20th Battalion played 19th baseball. We won quite easily by about 18-1. I did the pitching and had a pretty good day.

Jun. 9

Battalion went back into the front line on the Mercatel sector. MacLaren and I were kept out at the last minute to play ball. Gibson and MacRae are going instead. Rear details this time in Bailleulval Major Musgrove O.C.

In the evening Lt. Col. Rorke called the Battalion together and told us that he was leaving us to go back to England and might not return. Though very strict we all felt badly at the prospect of losing him. He came back to Bailleulval with the details.

Jun. 10

20th and 18th played off the Bde. baseball final, the latter winning 6-0. It was a great game but practise told. I did the pitching for the 20th and did not do too badly but my arm was not in condition after the game against the 19th. Kress did the pitching for the 18th. He is old pro and has a good "spitter."

Jun. 15

Divisional semi-final baseball games played off at Bassaeux. The games were:

18th vs. 26th

27th vs. 2nd M.G. Battalion

The 26th and the 2nd M.G. were the winners and play off on the 20th.

Jun. 20

Playoff in baseball, 26th vs. Engineers as M.G. team was laid up with influenza, the 26th won 6-0.

Jun. 21 - 22nd

Battalion relieved and came back to Wailly huts.

Jun. 25

My leave warrant for special Paris leave came through about 4 o'clock and after dinner went back to transport lines for the night.

Jun. 26

Left Transport Lines with Sgt. Potvin about 9.30 am and caught loory to Gouy-en-Artois. No train till 4 pm but got an engine to the main Arras - Doulleux road and there caught a train to Doulleux. At Doulleu there as no train to Abbeville until 7.30 pm so we caught a convoy as far as Avai-les-Chateau where we caught a supply to Abbeville where we arrived about about 4 o'clock instead of leaving Doulleux at 7.30 pm.

Had dinner at A.ville and caught train to Rouen at 9.30 pm. arrived Rouen about 7 am on the 27th.

We Spent the day in Rouen and left for Paris at midngiht arriving there about 8 am on the 28th

Jun. 28

---- Paris ----

Arrived about 8 am and walked to office of O.C. troops where we registered and received bread tickets. We then got a taxi and went to the Hotel Trianon 3 Cite Bergere. Faubourg Montmartre where I secured a room with Lieut. Jones of 51st Battery Australian Field Artillery. This is a small hotel but modern and reasonable. After breakfast we took a walk along the Blvd. to Madeleine, from the Madeleine to Place de la Concorde, up Ave. Champs Elysee to Arc de Triomphe. This is a great arch, the highest of its kind in the world, built by Napoleon to commemorate his victories. We then took a taxi back to the Opera and had lunch at the the Cafe de la Paix.

In the afternoon we took things easy and after dinner went to the Folies Bergere where we saw a fair show. There is only Folies Bergere with its cafe, interpreters, girls etc. Last act was interrupted by raid alarm and the theatre cleared in short order. We returned to our hotel and it was about hour later before the guns began to roar. The alarm was given by great sirens shrieking and they certainly made an awful row. The manager of the hotel made us go down cellar but we soon got tired of this and went to bed.

Jun. 29

Had breakfast in bed and then had lunch. After lunch we went out to the Bois de Boulogne a fine park and spent the afternoon there. By the time we had dinner it was too late to go to a show so we soon went to bed. There was another air raid alarm but this time it did not get us out of bed.

Jun. 30

In the afternoon we went to the Casino de Paris and saw a fairly good show. Had dinner in a little restaurant on the way home.

Jul. 1

Jones laid up with influenza so I took a walk to the Invalides by myself. There I met a French officer who spoke fairly good English, in fact, he was going as an interpreter to the American army and we accompanied each other around court-yard where they have a number of war trophies. Afterwards I invited him to have lunch with me and he took me to Pocardie's, an Italian restaurant where we had an excellent meal. After lunch we went to Au Printemps, the big departmental store where I bought a couple of waists, one for mother and the other for Blanche. Had dinner at Brebout's.

Jul. 2

Took a trip around city in taxi's with a party of officers and a Y.M.C.A guide. We visited a great many places including Notre Dame, Napoleon's Tomb, Trocadero, etc.,

Jul. 3

Took trip with Y.M.C.A out to Versaille where we went through the Palace and part of the grounds. The palace was beautiful, finer and richer than any place I have ever seen.

Jul. 4

The Americans had a great day and a general holiday was declared. In the morning a regt. of Yanks and a regt. of French marched through the city. In the afternoon Jones and I went out to the Bois de Boulogne and spent the afternoon out there.

Jul. 5

Left Paris about 4.18 pm for Rouen. Where we arrived about 9.15 pm. Stayed in Rouen over night and then reported to O.C. reinforcements following morning.

Jul.

Reported to camp but did not like look of it and determined to get out of it. Along with an English officer we made love to the R.J.O. who promised to put us on a train that night. Packed up and beat it without notifying the camp. Got a train at 9 pm for Doulleux.

Jul. 7

Arrived at Doulleux at mid-day and by means of lorries etc. Got back to Battalion at Hautville at 4 pm.

Jul. 8 - 13th

Remained at Hauteville carrying on training etc., on 11th Gen. Currie inspected 4th Bde. and presented medals.

Jul. 13

Went up to the line to look over in front of Arras. The Battalion moved up to Dainville. Came back to Division and remained there over night.

Jul. 14

Went up the line at night and relieved parts of two English Battalions. MacLaren relieved an outpost platoon in front of frontline.

Jul. 15

Very Quiet.

Jul. 16

I relieved MacLaren and his outpost that night. This position is about 300- 500 yards in front of the front line between Bois de Boeufs and Wancourt Road. Rather windy spot for sentry groups.

Jul. 17

With the exception of a few Whizz-Bangs it was very quiet. Sgt. Clark Beshevatz and I walked all through Bois de Boeuf during daylight but saw nothing. Under most circumstances this would have seemed very risky.

Swan ran into a Hun patrol in front of my post and had three men wounded.

Jul. 18

Quiet with exception to a few Whizz-Bangs and low flying aeroplane. Greedy was to relieve me but instead the Battalion was relieved by 16th Btn. and so I was relieved by a platoon of the 16th.

Jul. 19

Took light railway from near [Beuxaui] back to Aubin St. Vaast where we stayed until 4 pm. We moved off and marched to [Ecoire] where B coy officers had a row over beds and Alex Pyper went to C. Coy.

Jul. 20 - 22nd

Remained at Ecoire, training etc.

Jul 22

Left Ecoire about 8 am and marched 14 Kilometres to Isel-Les-Hameaux where we were to have a rest and got fairly good billets.

Jul. 23

Major Andrews called a meeting and told us that on the following day we would get a C.O. in Lt. Co. Hooper formerly of 19th, 15th, and 12th Res.

Jul. 24

Lt. Col. Hooper arrived in morning and in the afternoon we had an officer meeting to meet him. He seemed like a capable man.

Jul. 24th - 31

Remained at Isel-Les-Hameaux training etc. we got back at the 18th Btn. in baseball defeating them 8-5

Jul. 31

Marched from Isel-Les-Hameaux to _____ just south of St. Pol to take train for the south. Until an hour before starting it was thought we were going north. This was march of 10 miles. Entrained at 10.30 pm and went to Hougest behind Ameins where we detrained. After resting for an hour we set off again and marched another 10 miles to a place called Bougainville. When we got there we were all dead beat after our 20 mile hike. However we were fortunate in getting good billets and in getting a good meal.

Aug. 1

Slept in till noon and in afternoon held a [] inspection. Spent day quietly.

Aug. 2

Had a 25 kilometre march to practise with tanks. These were fine ones - larger and faster than those we had previously seen.

Aug. 3

In the afternoon we had a 10 kilometre hike to an artificial lake behind an old chateau for a swim. On returning we found we had to go up to the line that night.

Moved off at 9 o'clock and marched to a suburb of Amiens a distance of 25 kilometres. At one spot we had to go 2 hours without a halt.

Aug. 4

Arrived at destination about 7 am. "Dead to the world." No. 5 platoon arrived complete. Stayed for a day here in an old factory sleeping on a desk.

In the afternoon I learned I had to go forward with an advance party up near Villers-Bretoneaux. Occupied open ground for the night.

Aug. 5

Rained most of the day making things very uncomfortable as we had very poor cover. In afternoon Cronk and I went to a meeting at HQ and got an inkling of the show.

About 6 pm a message came in for me to report to the orderly room immediately in full kit. And found on reporting there I was going back to Canada to complete medical course. Reported to Brigade and Battalion read Headquarteres and got warrant etc.

Remained at Boutillerie over night and left for train in mess cart following morning.

Aug. 6

Left battalion at Boutillerie and went to Ally-sur-somm where I remained overnight.

Aug. 7

When we got into train this morning found there been a break down and no trains could run. However we caught a lorry which took us right down to Abbeville. At A. we caught the 3:00 train to Boulogne where we arrived about 6 o'clock. Stayed the Louvre Hotel over night.

Aug. 8

Big show started this am. Left for England on leave boat about 9.30 and arrived in Folkestone about 11.30. Got my trunk from Davis and caught 3 o'clock train to London. Arrived at 6 o'clock and put up at Ivanhoe Hotel.

Aug. 8 - Aug. 21

---- London ----

Saw the following shows: Lilac Domino - Leddy Gerrard Tails Up - Phyllis Workman Going Up - Jos. Coyne Soldier Boy - Winifred Barnes The Naughty Wife - Gladys Cooper As You Were - Mona Vivian, Alice D'lyse. Hearts of the World

Aug. 13 Clary Speirs, Carny, and I had dinner and Frascostis's costing £5

Aug. 15 Dunk came up to London to see me and we went to Piccadilly Grill and afterwards to Tails Up.

Aug. 20 about midnight on the 19th - 20th I received a telegram having me report to Argyle house to receive embarkation orders.

Aug. 20

Reported and got orders to leave at 9 am on 21st . Packed my trunk and sent it on ahead from Euston. Went to Going Up with Clary Speirs. Major Lamb stopped Ivanhoe for night.

Aug. 21

Left Euston for Liverpool at 9.10 am. Those in same compartment were Lt. Col. Kingsmill, 123rd battalion, Sister Keene, Capt. Pearson M.O., Capt. Struthers M.O., Capt. Struthers M.O., Davey Booth and I. Had a fine trip. Arrived at docks about 4 pm. and found we were sailing on Aquitania. Davey Booth and I in stateroom B.88

Aug. 22

Sailed 12 noon escorted by 4 destroyers, beautiful day. Went by south of Ireland. Played Bridge. Wonderful appetite and excellent meals. Lt. Col. Kingsmill, Capts. Pearson and Struthers, Sisters Keene and Bailey, and Lieuts. Booth and I are at same table.

Aug. 23

Out of sight of land when we awoke. Day cloudy. Feeling fine. Played bridge etc. In the evening we had a dance in the saloon. None of our party at all sick. Aquitania very steady and practically no vibration or roll.

Aug. 28

Arrived New York Aug. 28 after delightful trip. Left for Toronto on evening train.

Aug. 29, 1918

Home.

Discharged from Army September 12 1918

----- Finis -----