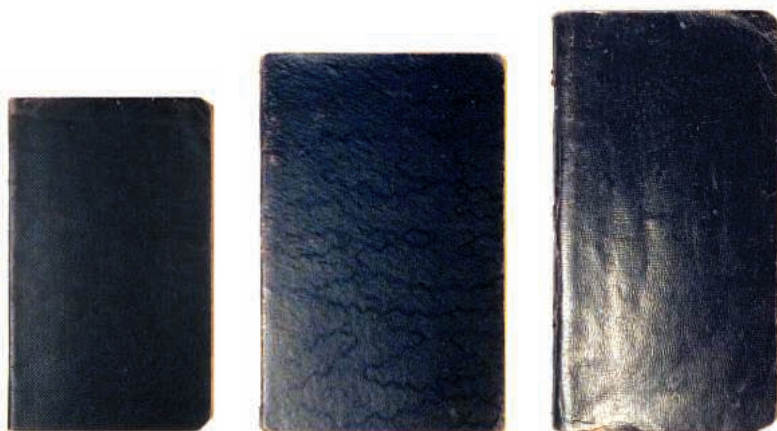




SMITH AT WAR







SMITH AT WAR

The 1914–19 Diaries
of Sapper GE Smith





Edited by RW Smith
Published by the narrative press

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Contents

Preface	7
I9I4	<i>II</i>
I9I5	<i>39</i>
I9I6	<i>I07</i>
I9I7	<i>I55</i>
I9I8	<i>I97</i>
I9I9	<i>233</i>



FOR THE MEN AT THE FRONT

Lord God of Hosts, whose mighty hand
 Dominion holds on sea and land,
 In Peace and War Thy Will we see
 Shaping the larger liberty.

Nations may rise and nations fall,
 Thy Changeless Purpose rules them all.

When Death flies swift on wave or field,
 Be Thou a sure defence and shield!
 Console and succour those who fall
 And help and hearten each and all!

O, hear a people's prayers for those
 Who fearless face their country's foes!

For those who weak and broken lie,
 In weariness and agony –
 Great Healer, to their beds of pain
 Come touch and make them whole again!

O, hear a people's prayers and bless
 Thy servants in their hour of stress!

For those to whom the call shall come
 We pray Thy tender welcome home,
 The toil, the bitterness all past,
 We trust them to Thy Love at last.

O, hear a people's prayers for all
 Who nobly striving, nobly fall!

For those who minister and heal,
 And spend themselves, their skill and zeal –
 Renew their hearts with Christ-like faith,
 And guard them from disease and death.

And in Thine own good time, Lord send
 Thy peace on earth till Time shall end!

John Oxenham

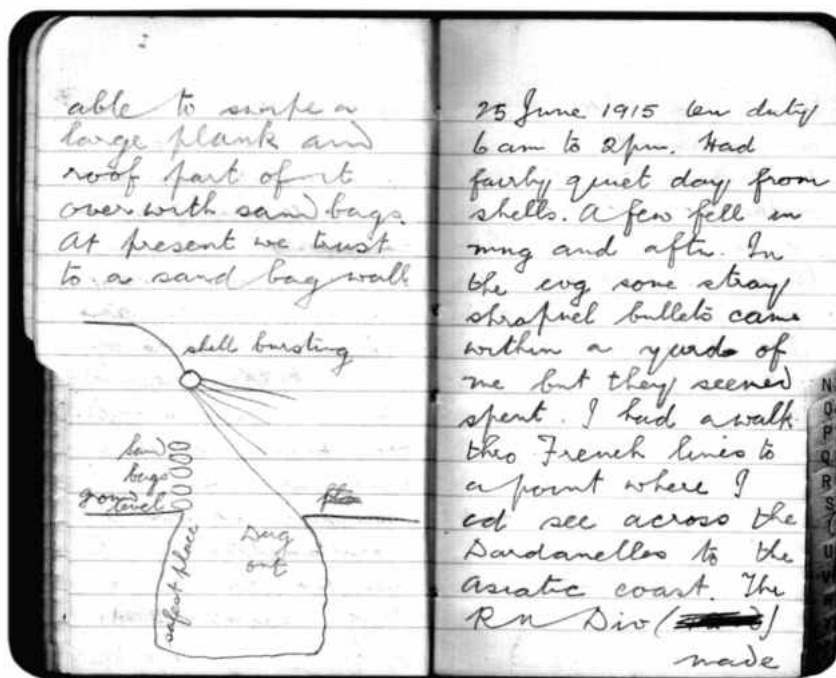
*To be sung to the tune 'Melita' –
 Eternal Father, Strong to Save*

Preface

In this book you will be reading about my late father, 72432 Sapper Smith GE of the Royal Engineers, and his experience of the The Great War of 1914–18. Throughout the war he kept a handwritten diary with entries for every day of his service, written in the regular hand of a morse signaller. I inherited these diaries when he died in 1965, and this is how I am able to bring you a first-hand account. It includes a verbatim transcript of all the diary entries. I hope you will enjoy this glimpse into the past.

Britain declared war on 4 August 1914. At that time, George Edward Smith, a native of Harrogate, Yorkshire, was working as a telegraphist at the Post Office. He was one of the early volunteers for military service. Within a week of the declaration of war he was reporting for duty at Gibraltar Barracks in Leeds, and was soon doing squad drill and rifle drill. Because of his Post Office telegraphy experience he was deployed as a signaller, and so joined the Northern Signals Unit of the Royal Engineers. At that time, there was no separate Royal Corps of Signals. Northern Signals were stationed at Biggleswade in Bedfordshire, and going there was an adventure in itself for a young man who knew only his native Yorkshire. Judge his reaction from his own account.

RW Smith 2000





Miss Margaret
Higgins Madge,
Sapper GE Smith
Eddie, Eddie's
wallet.

Three generations of Smiths have worked on the production of this book. First, and most significantly, my grandfather GE Smith (Eddie) compiled the diaries recording his war service in 11 small note books written in pencil in his neat, disciplined hand. In the 1980s my father, Ronald W Smith and my mother, Gwyneth, patiently transcribed the diaries adding some footnotes and clarifications, included in this edition of the diaries in italics. My father's ambition was that the diaries might be published but at that time he could find little interest in the material among publishers that he contacted. Now, as we mark the centenary of the events described in the diaries, it has passed to the next generation of Smiths to read and respond to the material written by our ancestor all those years ago. In this edition I have brought together the transcript prepared by my father with photographs associated with the events in the diaries that we have found in boxes and in cupboards while clearing out my father's house in Cardiff. The illustrations are from three sources: firstly from family pictures that have been stored away, which my father must have inherited from my grandfather; secondly Eddie was a keen amateur photographer and we have found a number of albums of contact prints of photographs taken during his adventures; finally Madge, who would become his wife and so my grandmother, kept a scrap book of postcards including many sent to her by Eddie whilst on military service. A selection of illustrations from all of these sources have been used in this edition.

While researching the photographs to be used in the book I came across the battered brown leather wallet, shown opposite, containing a beautiful studio portrait of my grandmother Madge. The portrait had been prepared by the same studio in Harrogate that also shot some formal portraits of Eddie in uniform, perhaps they were taken at the same time. Both photographs are shown opposite. It is likely that this wallet was carried by Eddie for the duration of the war as an intimate memory of home and the girl he would eventually marry. Folded on a scrap of paper in the wallet tucked behind the portrait were the words of a hymn, 'For the Men at the Front'.

Steven Smith 2014



1914

AUGUST

11TH Reported at Gibraltar Barracks, Leeds. Time spent in squad drill and rifle drill.

27TH Left Leeds at 3 pm for Biggleswade. Arrived at Biggleswade at 8.15 pm. Lodged in disused mansion at 10 pm. Temporary sleeping accommodation very rough. Fourteen men in a small room.

28TH Paraded at 6 am. Breakfast 7 am. Looked around Biggleswade until 9.30. Very favourably impressed with Biggleswade. Small agricultural town, flat country. Went out with cable wagon to Old Warden. Distance about one mile. Scenery magnificent. Market garden produce grown in large quantities. Experienced no difficulty with buzzer system of telegraphy. Billet with Mrs Ballard, 82 Hutchens Street.

29TH Saturday. Went out with cable wagon in morning. Stayed at base tent. Weather exceedingly warm and bright. Scenery beautiful. The country people are very generous and good natured. As soon as they see us halt, they bring fruit etc. Spent afternoon on parade. Commanding officer took names of those who are willing to go foreign, and said they would be trained on different lines to the others. The food and messing was much improved today. Spent evening in looking round the town. Turned in at 9 pm. The regulations are very strict that all troops should be in their billets at 9 pm. There is a rumour that we shall be going to Egypt! to replace regular troops withdrawn.

[At this time, Egypt was nominally an autonomous part of the Ottoman Empire, but in practice had been under British control and occupation since 1882.]

Sapper GE Smith.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1914

30TH Sunday. Very fine hot day. Paraded at 7 am. Breakfast, church parade and foot drill. Listed for guard at 7.15 pm tonight. My guard consists of 12 hours in a guard tent, two hours on and four hours off. During the period off guard, we are required to be in readiness to turn out any time. It behoves one to get some rest during the four hours, as there is no relief from duty the next day. We are to be very particular about custody of rifle, and not part with it in any way. We have instructions to butt anybody with rifle who cannot give countersigns, and persists in advancing. I took picket in horse lines nine to 11.

I noticed two officers loitering in the vicinity of the camp. I waited 20 minutes, and when they entered the camp, I challenged them for countersign. It is worthy of note that some of the men who were not recruited were afraid to go on guard at the gate, which was a lonely place under trees. They went on double guard, and then they kept calling us out. I offered to do 3–5 am at the gate. It was lonely and dark, but there was no one about.

31ST Monday. Finished guard at 6 am, and commenced day's work at 6.30 am. Felt very tired, as had only had two hours' sleep. During morning corps were rearranged, foreign volunteers were separated from those destined to stay at home. Sgt. Adams of the Royal Engineers, who has seen active service, was placed in charge of my section, No. 2. Had operating practice in afternoon. Finished work at 6 pm. Went for a swim in the River Ivel.

SEPTEMBER

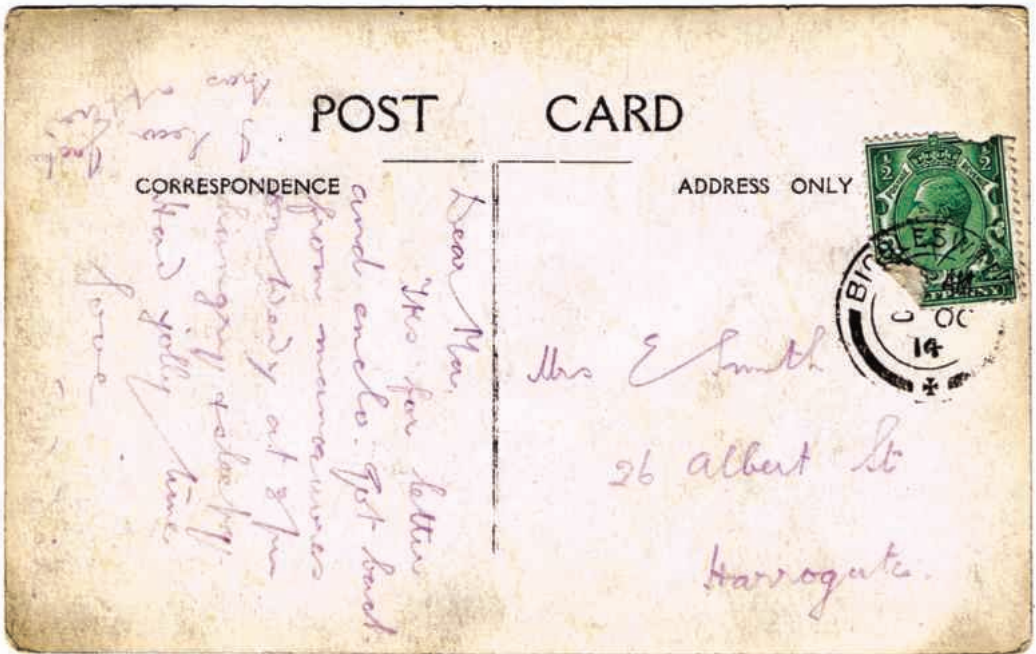
1ST Usual drill etc. Went for a swim in the evening. Am learning the art of grooming horses.

2ND Was nearly late for parade. Programme of work read out. It looks like hard graft. Hard drill all morning. Parade after dinner with full kit, and have to do so until further notice. It is a fag in hot weather, and of course there is the risk of losing articles. Went on River Ivel in the evening, and very nice too.

3RD Instructed in drills for passing out. Spent afternoon in marking clothes and kit. Went on river in punt at night. Very hot day.

4TH Recruit drill in morning. Paraded for pay in afternoon –22/6d with 1/6d messing fund deducted. Went on river in the evening. Very fine day.

5TH On guard for 24 hours. Commenced at 6 am. Find it a welcome change to the usual routine, as it is possible to get a good sleep. Duty consists of two hours on and four hours off. The camp which is in a cricket field and partly in an adjacent field, presents a striking picture.



Entering Biggleswade.

SEPTEMBER 1914

The horses stand in rows, head to lines. Between the horse lines are placed wagons and cable carts. All vehicles are painted in a dull cream, and could not be seen from a long distance in rural surroundings. The soldiers are all busy, some fully, some grooming horses and others marking time. It is a peaceful camp. One can imagine what a stampede there would be if the Germans happened to be approaching. The corps could not yet be called efficient, but no doubt with a little more training, the men will come into line with regular soldiers. Hitherto, promotion has been given to men in many cases who are not cut out for leaders. Many of the non-commissioned officers have been reduced in rank, and the sections are in most cases controlled by regular sergeants from the Royal Engineers. One man sent home this morning who was found to be covered in vermin. Such a thing is inexcusable at this time when it is possible to obtain a bath in the town.

Slept out in open air, 10.15 pm to 2.15 am. Woke up very cold. Guard was called out at 11 pm. We doubled to the town, and arrested a Royal Field Artillery man who had been assaulting our pickets.

6TH Sunday. Finished guard at 4.15 am. Slept till 6 am. Squad drill in the morning. Finished for the day at 1.30 pm. Took a bus to Cardington and found Alec McNaughton. Spent a fine time with the Scotsmen. Was greatly impressed by the brotherly feeling existing between them. Had mess with the Scottish Horse. Returned by 8 pm bus. The country is very flat, and produce for the London markets is grown chiefly. Luckily dodged two officers and the police patrol when returning home after 9 pm. Alec McNaughton is one of the best.

[Alec McNaughton was a relative of Madge Higgins whom Eddie married after the war.]

7TH Plenty of drill in the morning. Practical lecture in laying cables. Signed today for foreign service. We are to receive Imperial Service badges. Afternoon lecture on sanitation, health etc. Assisted in erecting tents for telegraphy instruction. Had tea out with Joyful and Mayhew. Enjoyed it immensely. Took duty at post office, 10 to 4 am for any late telegrams. No work to do, so wrote a few letters. Slept from about 2 am till about 6.30 am.

8TH Paraded at 8 am before medical officer with bad heel caused by boot. Got heel dressed and attended for duty. Paraded again at 3 pm in full kit. Got a suit of jumpers dished out. More stuff to carry to camp each day. Had a bath at night. Spent all day in waiting, but it was worth it. Was hit on cheek with a horse, nothing serious.

9TH Commenced 6 am 24-hour guard. Nothing exceptional transpired. Slept out in open air. Very nice and warm.

SEPTEMBER 1914

10TH Finished guard at 6 am. Drill etc. during day.

11TH Stable picket all day. Received pay –17/6d. Turned in early.

12TH Fine bright day. Commenced raining in afternoon. Paraded in rain and performed stable work. Went to Hitchen Street picture house in evening.

13TH Sunday. Church parade at 9.30 am. Afterwards one hour's drill, then moving horse lines till dinner. Paraded for stables at 4.30 pm. Went to Sandy after tea. Returned at 9.15 pm.

14TH Paraded at 6 am. Drill and skirmishing after breakfast until noon. Cleaned harness in afternoon. Guard from 6.30 pm at officers' quarters, the White Swan Hotel. Time off-duty spent in harness room.

15TH Paraded after finishing guard. Hour's drill in morning, then skirmishing until midday stables. Find skirmishing very enjoyable and interesting. I believe I was cut off by enemy, but there was a doubt about it. Cleaning harness in afternoon. Went to pictures in evening.

16TH Paraded at 6 am. Hour's drill after breakfast. Skirmishing until dinner time. Testing cables in afternoon. Had a bath in evening.

17TH Paraded 6 am. Went with wagon, laying cable. Took duty No. 3, laying out cable. Found it a heavy job, especially in the rain. In afternoon fixed tents and cleaned cable wagons. Went to pictures in evening.

18TH Parade 6 am. Went cable laying in morning at Potton. Pay parade in afternoon, 17/6d. Went to St George pictures in evening.

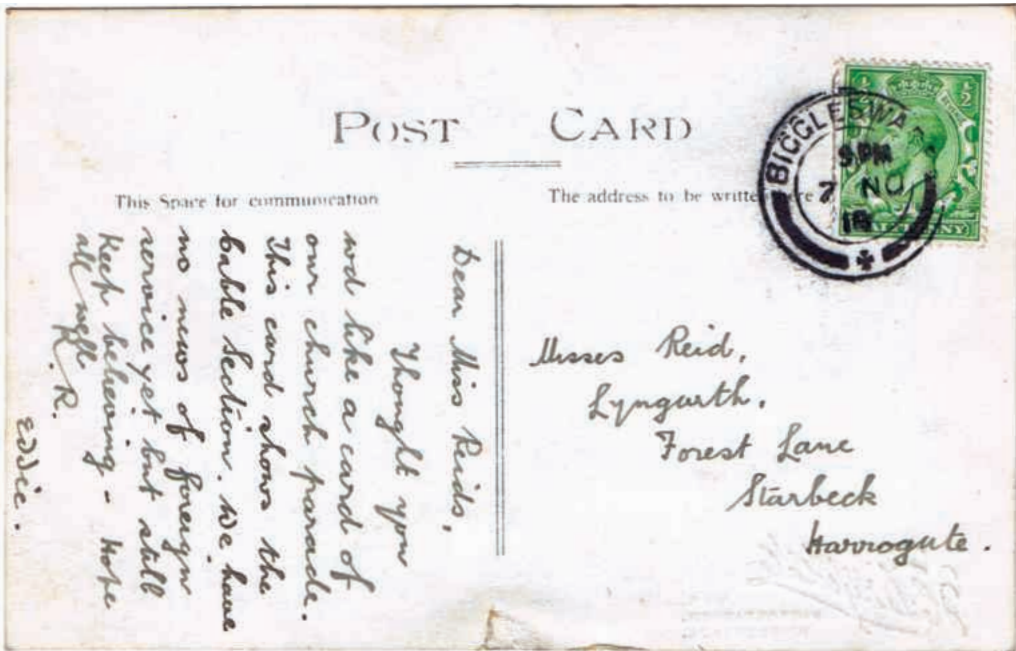
19TH Paraded at 6 am. Cable laying in morning through Potton to Everton. Took duty No. 5. After lecture on rifle, went on river in the evening.

20TH Sunday. Parade 7 am. Church parade 9.45 am after one and a half hours' foot drill. Afternoon off. Went boating. Also went punting in the evening.

21TH Parade 6 am. Went out with cable wagon at 8.30 am in London Road direction. Took duty No. 5. In afternoon, cleaned up generally. My friends Mayhew and Elliott transferred to HQ section.

22ND On guard at mansion all day. Very nice change and rest.

23TH Finished guard at 6 am. 9 am went out on full day's cable laying. I was allotted the job of spare operator, and had to ride on general store wagon. Our



Church Parade
Biggleswade,
postcard to Misses
Reid - Aunt and
guardian of Madge.

SEPTEMBER 1914

base was pitched at Hickwell Green. The village is very old fashioned, and on the green is a maypole. The scenery is very fine. Many of the cottages are thatched. Surrounding country fairly flat, but gentle slopes are met with occasionally. Went through picturesque village of Old Warden. Passed a battery on the road of Royal Horse Artillery. Laid cable as far as Cardington, five and a half miles. Met Alec McNaughton. Reeled up at 1.30 pm, after having bread and cheese for lunch. Arrived home at 3.45 pm. Had fine day. Dinner on arrival. Went to pictures in evening.

24TH Paraded at 6 am. Went out with cable wagon. Was left at base with Sapper Kilkenny. Wagon went on to Broom and Stanford. We landed back in camp about 11 am. In afternoon was inoculated against typhoid and enteric. Felt very sick afterwards, and had to fall out of ranks. Was OK after a short rest and proceeded to camp. Had a bath in the evening. Had a little riding practice in the morning, about 10 minutes.

25TH Nearly all men came on feeling sick and seedy after breakfast. I put my name down for exercising horses. We had ride of about 10 miles, trotting and walking. I got into the bumping up and down very nicely. Before dinner, feeling very bad. No doubt effect of inoculations. Did not feel like fighting for dinner, so had some lunch at a cafe. At 3 pm, paraded with full kit. The warmer weather has returned again. Received pay of £1 3s 6d. Henceforth we are to be paid half a week, out of which we are to buy our uniform when it wears out. Drew lots for 48 hour leave. I drew 17 October.

26TH Paraded at 6 am, feeling exceedingly seedy with arm. Went out exercising horses 8.45 am to 10.30 am. We each take two. I made fair progress with the riding. At noon stables got kicked by a horse. Felt little worse, apart from the shock of being put on the floor very suddenly. Feeling seedy and stiff with riding. Had a walk around the town in the evening. Landlady has taken bed away. Had to kip on the floor. Saw billet man about change of billet when recruits arrive.

27TH Sunday. Paraded at 7 am. At 9.15 am, church parade. Service held in parish church. Enjoyed the service very much. Hour's riding and exercising horses. Enjoyed it very much. Medically examined for foreign service. Off after dinner until 5 pm, then on horse lines until 7 pm. Went to sacred band concert in evening.

28TH Paraded 6 am. Went out with cable wagon, and operated at base. Got change of billet to a Mrs Izzard, Ellington Saffron Road. Absolutely fine digs and the people are very nice. After tea, hired a cycle and had a run to Hitchin, Herts., about 11 miles from Biggleswade. Could only spend a few minutes there, as we are due in at 9 pm. Hitchin is a nice little town.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1914

29TH Paraded at 6 am. Tidied up wagons in the morning, after reeling off cable and making permanent joints. After tea had cycle ride to Bedford, about 11 miles. This is an excellent cycling district, being nearly flat, and most of the roads are asphalted. The fields are full of garden produce, such as carrots, cabbages, marrows and beans. The birch trees, which are numerous, present a peculiar appearance, being clothed with foliage to the ground. Spent half an hour in Bedford, which was crowded with soldiers. The Great Ouse was illuminated.

30TH Commenced at 6 am. Was on guard for 24 hours. Lodged in a very nice roomy tent with plenty of blankets. There was a white frost this morning, so expect a cold night. Finished my duty at 10 pm. Slept in tent until 5 am. One resident sent jug of hot tea for guard. It was a treat.

OCTOBER

1ST Paraded at 8.30 am. Went out for full day's cable laying. I was stationed at base in small tent. Dismantled at about 3.30 pm, rode home on a horse.

2ND Paraded at 6 am. Rain set in at 9 am. Sent out with wagon on London Road to Dunton. Had to ride horseback to camp alone about five miles. Beginning to feel quite at home on a horse. Received pay of -18/1d, just in time as I was entirely without money. Cycled to Baldock, enjoyed ride very much, seven miles.

3RD Paraded 6 am. On line guard today, so stay on horse lines all day. Men had Saturday afternoon off. Evening had a walk round town.



Regimental group portrait. Eddie back row second from left.



Off to Dinner at Binkswade. Northern School Companies.



POST CARD

ADDRESS



Miss M. J. Higgins,
Pyngarth,
Forest Lane,
Starbeck
Harrogate.

Dr M,
No very much for
you, I guess you will. We
are all connected, always
knowing, that's taken. We
were taken without request.
We have been skunking
this morn, I got out off and
fell asleep in a field. We
don't like me Larry, it was no
tempting and no fear of getting
shot. Don't put my name
down for some leave, probably
48 hrs. Will write later love
Eddie

Off for dinner. Eddie sixth from right.

OCTOBER 1914

4TH Sunday. Running cable and making new joints. After in billets. Evening had a bus ride to Sandy.

5TH Paraded at 6 am. Running cables and making joints all morning. Paraded at 3 pm with full kit. Left for Eyeworth with several cable and store wagons. I was allotted duty No. 1, and had charge of cable wagon stores, and my duty consisted of operating on wagon. We arrived in Eyeworth at 5.30 pm, and pitched camp in a field. Had nice tea round a camp fire in the dark. Spent evening in the village inn. Very nice smoking concert. Slept on straw in the barn, kindly placed at our disposal by the farmer. Called up at 5.40 am.

6TH Our detachment set off for Sutton at 8.15 am, and there joined headquarters section. The country is fairly flat and well wooded. There are very fine houses, and the farming appears to be carried on a large scale. Many of the houses are thatched. Remained at Sutton until 3 pm, then moved off, reeling in seven miles of cable. Passed through Eyeworth, Guilden Morden and Steeple Morden, where we finished reeling in. Proceeded to Ashwell, Herts., then on to Odsey, Cambs. Arrived about 6 pm, and made camp in a field, cooked our meal. Excellent small tent for sleeping in. Was on line guard from 10.30 pm until 2 am. Found guard duty with camp fire very enjoyable.

7TH Called up at 5 am, and instructed to be ready for 6 am. Got some breakfast, but no time for washing. Proceeded to Ashwell, and from there laid cable to Hinxworth. Arrived at 8.20 am. Proceeded to London Road about two miles from Biggleswade, laying cable all way. Arrived at 9 am, turned into Army Headquarters at Bleak Hall. I operated in base tent. Dismantled and set off for Biggleswade after 12.30 pm. Arrived camp at 2 pm. Stables till 3 pm, then dinner not ready for half an hour, so I had some out. Had enjoyable time, but finished up very tired and hungry. Went to pictures in evening.

8TH Paraded 6 am. Cleaning wagons and gearing all morning. Adjusting instruments in afternoon.

9TH Paraded 6 am. Rifle parade at 8.30 am. Found I had the wrong rifle, and mine was missing. May hear further about it if mine does not turn up. Pay parade 3 pm - 18/8d. Went to concert at Town Hall in evening. Worked at Post Office all night.

10TH Paraded at 8.30 am. Went for one and a half hours' ride on Bonny and Black Bess. Enjoyed it very much. Inoculated in afternoon. Went round fair in the evening.

11TH Sunday. Paraded 7 am. Church parade at 9.15 am. Off in the afternoon, but back for evening stables. Spent evening at Mrs Land's.

OCTOBER 1914



The regimental group haircut. Eddie back row in front of tree trunk.

12TH Paraded at 6.30 am. Went out with wagons to Ickwell Green. I was check boy at Army Headquarters. Horse ran away with me when riding back to camp. Managed to pull him up all right. Had very good dinner today – sea pie. In afternoon received preliminary instruction regarding musketry, prior to going on range. In the evening went to Shefford, five miles away with pal and my landlord and Mrs. Had a nice time, returned home at 1 am.

13TH Paraded 6.30 am. During morning received further instruction regarding musketry. Afternoon, musketry instruction continued. Evening writing letters. Had a game of cards for about an hour.

14TH OCTOBER Paraded at 6 am. Musketry instruction after 9.30 am. Rained heavily up to 9.30 am. In morning had instruction in musketry again. Sgt. Brown the instructor is a very thorough man, and it is quite a pleasure to be under him. He is well educated and gives lucid explanations. In addition he is kind and thoughtful. He is the essence of smartness, and expects his pupils to be the same. In the afternoon, it rained from 3 pm onwards. I sheltered under awning of tent. At evening stables, the whole camp was flooded, and we had to perform the work in heavy rain. Camp life assumes a different aspect, but with a good overcoat, and a pair of watertight boots, I am still merry and bright. Went to pictures in the evening. Suppose we shall have a heavy time cleaning up tomorrow.

15TH Paraded 6.30 am. Camp in very wet condition. Left on manoeuvres at 9 am. I was allotted the work of relief operator, mounted on a cycle. Army

OCTOBER 1914

headquarters fixed in a field at Broom. Had to stay here as messenger. Moved off to Shefford about 1 pm. At 1.20 pm, I was left at the roadside with a small telegraph instrument called a 'portable D'. I had to await arrival of airline where we are to join up. Left here about 3 pm. Could not get both offices. Went in direction of our wagon, teeing in to find fault beyond Shefford. Teed in and found both offices through. Went after wagon to new headquarters at Silsoe. Arrived at George Hotel about 5 pm. Found plenty of biscuits. Our wagon had gone on to lay some more cable. I went to our store wagon, found it at the end of a dark field. After much trouble I found some wood, and made a fire. Had a dixie of tea ready for our section on their arrival at 9 pm. Was going to retire at 10 pm, when a message arrived for me to go on operating at Army headquarters. Finished duty at 1.30 am.

16TH Slept in empty bedroom on floor. Up again at 6 am on operating duty. Had plenty to eat at breakfast. Am here without a cent in my pocket. Have existed on 1/- since Wednesday. Find I can be happy without any money. Am having a great time, but getting very short of bacco. Left at noon. Reeled in for eight miles. Arrived at camp at 2.30 pm. No time for dinner. Received pay, 18/8d. Left Biggleswade for 48 hours' leave. Had a look round Peterborough, seeing a little of the exterior of the cathedral. Arrived Harrogate at 11 pm.

17TH Spent morning at office, after an evening at Starbeck. Today realised the preliminary step towards my greatest ambition in life. Needless to say I feel a new kind of happiness. Am filled with a desire to make my Madge the happiest girl

Smoking break,
Eddie second
row, far left.



OCTOBER 1914

in the world. Cannot help wondering why I am so favoured and whether I am worthy. It will in the future be my chief aim to live nearer my ideals of life, and I shall feel in some way satisfied if I can add appreciably to Madge's happiness.

[Madge lived in Starbeck on the outskirts of Harrogate.]

18TH Sunday. Church in morning. Had walk to Starbeck in the afternoon. Spent the rest of time at home. Left for Biggleswade at 8.25 pm. Witnessed the arrival of some of the wounded soldiers at Leeds. It touched me very much to think that some of them are perhaps lamed for life.

19TH Arrived at Peterborough at 1.20 am. Next train for Biggleswade will bring me in too late for parade, so our party went as far as Finsbury Park Station. We spent two hours in looking around. Caught the 5.26 am train for Biggleswade. Arrived at Biggleswade at 6.35 am, and was on parade about half an hour late. In morning had a lecture on telegraphy and musketry. In afternoon musketry again. Was given two hours' defaulters and confined to barracks two nights for being late from leave. Appealed to officer as no chance had been given me to offer an explanation. Matter left in abeyance. Went to pictures in the evening.

20TH Musketry in morning. Same in afternoon. Writing letters and getting ready for manoeuvres in evening.

21ST Paraded at 6 am in full marching order. Left on manoeuvres at 9 am. Arrived at Ickwell Green at 9.30 am. Wagon moved off to Old Warden. I stayed at base operating. Had a good dinner, operating most of the time. Find it rather cramped in small tent. Our section wagon has laid 122 miles of cable, and we expect to reel it up tonight. A Belgian officer in uniform was walking about the Green, but he did not speak to us. 6 pm received word to stay all night at Ickwell. Fixed up a ground sheet and blanket in my tent for sleeping. Hope we get something to eat and a little rest. Walking as far as Northill. Retired about 10 pm. Found it exceeding cold during the night, and was kept awake with intense cold.

22ND Rose at 4 am, and had breakfast in the rain. Moved off about 6 am. Went through Old Warden, Southill Station, Millbrook and Ridgmont, reeling up. The journey was about 20 miles. Rain fell during the morning. We arrived at Ridgmont about 2 pm and had lunch. It was very cold riding on the telegraph box on the wagon, but the journey was very enjoyable. The scenery was more wild and hilly than we had previously seen in the country, and the hills were covered with pine woods. The autumn tints add a charm to the trees. Was liberally treated at Ridgmont by the residents to cocoa, apples and walnuts. Called for a postcard at a shop, and was asked to partake

OCTOBER 1914



Cleaning and painting party.
Eddie front row left.

of tea. In mean time detachment had orders, and Kilkenny and I were absent. Sergeant said he would have to report us. Oh dear, am always in the cart! Was detailed to ride in store wagon, and we had to load five drums, each weighing 2 cwt. The wagon was too heavy for horses, but we left about 5.30 pm following cable cart to Westoning, six miles. After two miles it became dark, and we are stuck half way up the hill with No. 1 amp. All attempts to start wagon were futile. I walked on to find a camp about four miles, and get assistance. They were stationed at Checkers Inn. Reported, had a good feed of bully beef, bread and beer. Went as far as village school, which schoolmaster had kindly opened to us. Had a long chat with schoolmaster, who was one of the best. He invited us to cocoa, bread and cheese. I made a short speech to thank him on behalf of the boys. Left at 9 pm. Retired at 10 pm. Slept on rug in front of fire in a kind of kitchen.

23RD Up at 6 am Took charge of instruments for a while. Had wash and then distributed rations. Detailed to ride in store wagon. Went through picturesque villages of Greenfield and Flitton, also Shefford. Arrived back at camp at 2 pm, a little tired and unshaved. Had dinner and fell in for rifle inspection and pay at 3.30 pm: 18/8d. Just in time. I had spent my last penny this morning.

24TH Paraded at 6.30 am. Musketry in morning. Rained heavily. Off duty in afternoon. Went to pictures in the evening.

25TH Sunday. Parade 7.30 am. Church Parade at 9.15 am, then moving picket lines because camp was in such a bad state. Four of us moved about a ton of mud. Off in afternoon, and back for evening stables. Raining hard all day. In evening had some organ music at Edgar's.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1914

26TH On guard at barracks for 24 hours. Found it a nice change.

27TH Finished guard at 6.30 am. Paraded at 8.45 am. Musket drill. Marched for a few miles. Instructed in judging distances. Musketry after. Stayed in billet at night.

28TH Paraded 6.30 am. Cleaned wagons in the morning. Dropped an iron-jumper on my toe. Caused much grief and pain at the time. Went to pictures in the evening.

29TH Paraded at 6 am. Eighty four men absent. Our section remained in while others went on manoeuvres. In afternoon was sent to do some weeding at officers' stables. Felt very nice to be on one's own. Went to pictures in the evening.

30TH Paraded 6.30 am. Weeding at stables all morning. Am still very lame with accident. Pay parade in afternoon. Went to pictures in the evening. Had a look in the operating room.

31ST Paraded 7 am. There is to be an hour for breakfast and dinner, and tea will be at 5 pm. Street patrol at 9 pm will be discontinued. The bugle will be sounded for alarm twice monthly, and we are to fall in with full kit ready for moving off. It may happen at any time of night or day. Had afternoon off, but paraded for evening stables. Went to Bedford in the evening, and spent a few hours there. Returned by 11 pm bus. The town was very lively with Scottish troops. The town possesses good shops and the Great Ouse adds much to the town. The trip afforded a nice change to the rural life at Biggleswade.

NOVEMBER

1ST Sunday. Paraded at 7 am. Church at 9.15 am. Spent the rest of the morning cleaning up a stores wagon which I am to take charge of. My first step towards any different work in the Army, and I shall feel happier knowing that I am responsible for something. After stables, met Alec McNaughton and two pals from Scottish Horse. Took them to billet for tea. Spent pleasant evening looking round Biggleswade.

2ND Paraded 7 am. On guard at barracks for 24 hours. Did a little sewing etc.

3RD Paraded 7 am. Telegraphy classes in morning. In afternoon cleaning wagon. Pictures in the evening.

NOVEMBER 1914

4TH Paraded 7 am. Telegraphy classes in morning. Operating practice in afternoon. I could not read 30 per minute. Wrote letters in the evening.

5TH Paraded 7 am. Took bus for Cambridge at 8.30 am. Had 20 miles riding through very fine country. Arrived at shooting range about 10.30 am.

Shooting scores were:

110 yds grouping all within 8" range	20 points
200 yds application	12 points
200 yds without rest	11 points
300 yds with rest	13 points
Total	56 points out of 85

I am not quite satisfied, but hope to do better tomorrow. It was a dull day, and a choppy wind was blowing. Arrived back at 4.15 pm. Was sorry they gave us no chance to see Cambridge. The range is about a mile from the town. The country was fairly flat, and there were only two small villages on our route. Had a little shooting practice at Conservative Club miniature range. Did not distinguish myself. Went to pictures. Bought a packet of Woodbines, which left me with 3d, but it is pay day tomorrow.

6TH Arrived at shooting range about 10 am. Fairly dull morning.

Shooting scores were:

100 yds no rest grouping – washed out. Only 4 on target
200 yds without rest – 14
200 yds behind cover, target exposed for 5 seconds – 4 bulls, 1 miss = 16
300 yds kneeling, 2 bulls = 16 points
500 yds resting, 41, 1B = 16

7TH Arrived 9.45 am at range. Fine bright day.

Shooting scores were:

100 yds grouping without rest – 4 on 12" ring = 10
200 yds disappearing khaki on green, up 5 seconds – 2 inners, 1 magpie, 1 outer = 9
200 yds khaki man: 8 rounds in 1 minute without rest, lying – 2 bulls, 4 inners, 2 magpies = 24
500 yds without rest on khaki man on green = 5

Went to pictures in the evening. Sorry we had no opportunity to see Cambridge.

8TH Sunday. Was on stable guard all day, so could not get to church parade. Horses very quiet. Was able to do a little reading. I sit in a wagon and look over

NOVEMBER 1914

a sea of mud, but still the camp looks peaceful. The trees number amongst the finest I have ever seen. The autumnal tints of green, gold and brown look fine.

I did resent this guard on Sunday, but after all it is not so bad. I can smoke and have a quiet think all alone. Up to the present, I value my experience in the Army. I find I am a unit and only a mediocre one at that, but I can find pleasure in living my own life, and keeping to my own principles. I hope our call to more useful service will not be long, as I am anxious to show I can do my share fearlessly along with the rest. I am happy knowing the best girl in the world gives me her love. Am sorry I am not clever or gifted in any way. The gift I can offer is faithful love. It is not much, but one of the things which is very noticeable when absent. Went to sacred concert in the evening.

9TH Paraded at 7 am. Telegraphy practice in the morning and afternoon. Bang off colour all day with cold. Went to bed about 7 pm.

10TH Paraded 7 am. Cable laying in morning. I took No. 1 duty, operating on wagon. Took route through Broom. Telegraphy in afternoon.

11TH Paraded 7 am. Telegraphy practice in morning. In afternoon we paraded in very heavy rain. No officers appeared on parade. We were marched through the town to town hall for a lecture respecting the war. We were all wet through, especially at the feet. Marched back for stables, and performed work in heavy rain. Went to pictures in the evening.

12TH Paraded at 7 am. On guard for 24 hours. Did a bit of reading.

13TH Paraded 9 am with full kit, ready for moving off. Left for Stanford about 4 miles away. We are to stay while stables are being built. We are stabled at a very bleak farm. My billet is very nice. In fact I have clicked once again. Spent most of the evening talking to the people. Called on the 'Knut' of the village, a gentleman farmer, and spent half an hour chatting.

14TH Paraded at 7 am. Digging and cleaning up in the morning. Finished work at 4 pm. Cleaned buttons and made myself a smart soldier. Walked to Shefford in the evening. Had a nice time. Supper at Odell's.

15TH Parade 7 am. Church parade at 9.10 am. Marched to Southill Church and there Nos 1 and 3 Sections. On return was dismissed until stables, which were fixed at noon. Finished work after dinner. Spent afternoon and evening in billet. Afterwards spent an hour at Inskip's farm.

16TH Paraded 7 am. Received orders to parade after breakfast with full kit to proceed to Biggleswade. Instructions to stand by to move off any time.

NOVEMBER 1914

Waiting at Biggleswade all morning. Then paraded at 2.30 pm. Stood on parade in sleet and rain for one and a half hours whilst we were inspected. Sent back to Stanford, and arrived about 5 pm. Working until 10.40 pm. Went to billet and had a good night's rest.

17TH Paraded at 7 am. Very cold morning. Left Stanford at 10 am for Biggleswade. The weather was fine but exceedingly cold. Hands and feet nearly frozen. Left Biggleswade about noon. Our section was detached to move off somewhere for active service. We expect orders any minute. A large number of the Bedford troops have already gone. Arrived in Stanford and had dinner. Arranged stores in the afternoon.

18TH Out with wagon in morning. I stayed in base tent.

19TH Paraded 7 am. Cable laying in morning. Went through Clifton and Henlow. Walked as far as Clifton in the evening.

20TH Paraded 7 am in morning. Went to Biggleswade to practise entraining and detraining. Entrained in 1 minute. Detrained in 10 minutes. Cleaning tents in the afternoon. Walked to Shefford in the evening.

21ST Paraded at 7 am. Tidying stores in morning. Finished work in afternoon at 3 pm. On 14 hours' picket commencing at 5.30 pm.

22ND Sunday. Finished picket at 5 am. Paraded 6.30 am. At 8 am rode to Biggleswade in GS wagon for church parade. Attended Lord Roberts's memorial service. Marched back to Stanford. Attended for evening stables, then finished for the day. Stayed at home all evening and retired early.

23RD Our messing has been altered. 1/3d. a day is allowed for each man. I am on the committee to deal with the rations and see that each man receives his due. Had a walk round the village in the evening. Also had a bath.

24TH Paraded 7 am. Cable laying in morning. I took base. It is a cold job. In afternoon cycled to Biggleswade, then Southill and Broom for the officer. Spent evening in billet.

25TH Paraded 7 am. Cable laying in morning. Operating on wagon. Went in direction of Upper Coldecote. Clipping horses in afternoon. Had a short walk in the evening and some music at the Golden Lion.

26TH Paraded at 7 am. Went with store wagon to Biggleswade. Purchased food and spent a short time in my billet. Bought some boots for 19/3d. Met Kemp's people from Bedford in the evening. Spent evening in billet.



POST CARD

CORRESPONDENCE

ADDRESS



Mrs M J Higgins
 Lyngarth
 Forest Lane
 Starbeck
 Harrogate.

Post M.
They do not take
me into GB so have
not had time to send
you a card. Am
enjoying shooting and
occasionally get a
bull. Sping again know them
will be the finished
article no regards
training. Outing later.

Love
Edw.

K&S

Cambridge billet.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1914



On patrol.

27TH Paraded at 7 am. Painted office plates in the morning. In afternoon given the job of signwriting the horses' names. The War Office invited us to enlist in the regular Army for War period, after which time we should retire to the Territorials. They say we shall stand a better chance of going to the front, and the operators may be drafted into other signal units. I handed my name in for transfer. We received Imperial Service badges today. They are to show we have volunteered for the front.

28TH Paraded 6 am. At 8 am marched to Biggleswade to hear the order regarding transfer to the regulars. Marched back in the rain. Finished work after dinner. Changed wet clothes and stayed in billet.

29TH Sunday. Paraded 7 am. Marched to service in Southill Church. Finished work after dinner. Spent most of the time in billet.

30TH Paraded 7 am. Signwriting in morning and afternoon. After dinner sergeant took us in drill. He had us doubling for nearly half an hour. We thought he had gone stone Jackson. However we stuck it, and finished up very hot and tired. On guard 5.30 am to 7 am. Warm south-westerly gale accompanied by rain. On the whole a very comfortable guard.

DECEMBER

1ST Paraded 7 am. Signwriting in morning, and same all day. Writing letters in the evening.

2ND Worked all day preparing for move off. Had a walk to Shefford in the evening with Sid. Called on Sammy Odell, one of our new friends who is an antique dealer. Had supper there.

DECEMBER 1914

3RD Paraded at 7 am. Doing a little touching up with paint anywhere required. In the evening went to Shefford for a haircut. Had bath afterwards. We are getting some very heavy gales accompanied by rain.

4TH Took base in morning for No. 1 Section when laying cable. Replenished batteries in afternoon. Received pay 18/8d. Walked to Biggleswade in evening. Visited billet.

5TH Paraded 7 am. At 9 am set out on horses and rode to near Cardington for instruction in map reading. Arrived back about noon, after very enjoyable ride of about 12 miles. Finished work at 1 pm. Walked to Shefford and hired cycle. Waited for Kemp and Topham, and we proceeded to Bedford, 11 miles. Had tea at Kemp's and went to theatre afterwards. Arrived home at 1 am.

6TH Sunday. Paraded 7 am. Church parade at 9 am. Marched to Southill Church. On teatime stables, then finished for day. Spent evening writing letters.

7TH Paraded 7 am. Out on wagon in direction of Shefford and Bedford Road. Rifle instruction in afternoon prior to going shooting. Reading in evening.

8TH Paraded 7 am. Instruction in musketry in morning and afternoon. In evening set off to Shefford to attend a whist drive. Met Odell and went home with him. Did not reach whist drive.

9TH Paraded 7 am. Musketry instruction in morning. Fog came on after dinner. Further instruction in musketry. Find it fairly cold lying down in damp field. The practice we are having is good, and will stand us in good stead when on the range. We are instructed to parade tomorrow morning in full marching order to proceed to Cambridge. We are to billet there four days. On way home met mounted orderly with message cancelling our Cambridge trip for a few days. Spent evening in billet clearing up and reading and cleaning buttons.

10TH Paraded 7 am. In morning some hints regarding the rifle were read out to us. Then we had physical exercises for one hour. Such exercises if carried out daily would be beneficial. Had a game of football after dinner. In afternoon cleaned cable wagon which had previously been nearly cleaned away. The fact is that we have nothing to do, and they put us on this job. I wish we had more real work. We have already rubbed a large amount of paint off the wagons with cleaning them. We were subjected to the sergeant's tyranny this afternoon. He is an ignorant bully, and if he pursued such tactics at the front would soon get dropped from behind. I try to like him, but really have no confidence in his judgement. He shouts and raves at the least trouble. I do not really mind, as he does not persecute me personally, as he does some other men. I should be inclined to have an understanding if he did so.

DECEMBER 1914

Many of the men are reluctant to join the regulars, fearing they may meet sergeants of similar calibre. I am pleased to say that many of the regular sergeants are gentlemen, and try to help rather than hinder the men. We received further instruction in musketry under a sergeant instructor from Biggleswade. We have been practising most of the tests which we shall be put to at Cambridge. One of the tests is to take some trenches. We advance at the double in extended order, drop down and fire a few rounds, and continue to do this until close to the trenches. When close to the enemy, we swoop down with a war whoop and clear them out. It is most exciting, but there is no danger. Spent evening reading and cleaning my rifle. It is good to spend a little time cleaning rifle prior to firing.

11TH Paraded 7 am. Cable laying in morning. Took No. 5 duty on wagon. Went through Shefford and along Sandy Lane. The latter is a cart track leading to the Warren. We had a very exciting ride, and the cart was nearly upset several times, owing to the bad roads. Had drill and musketry practice in the afternoon. Spent evening in billet writing letters.

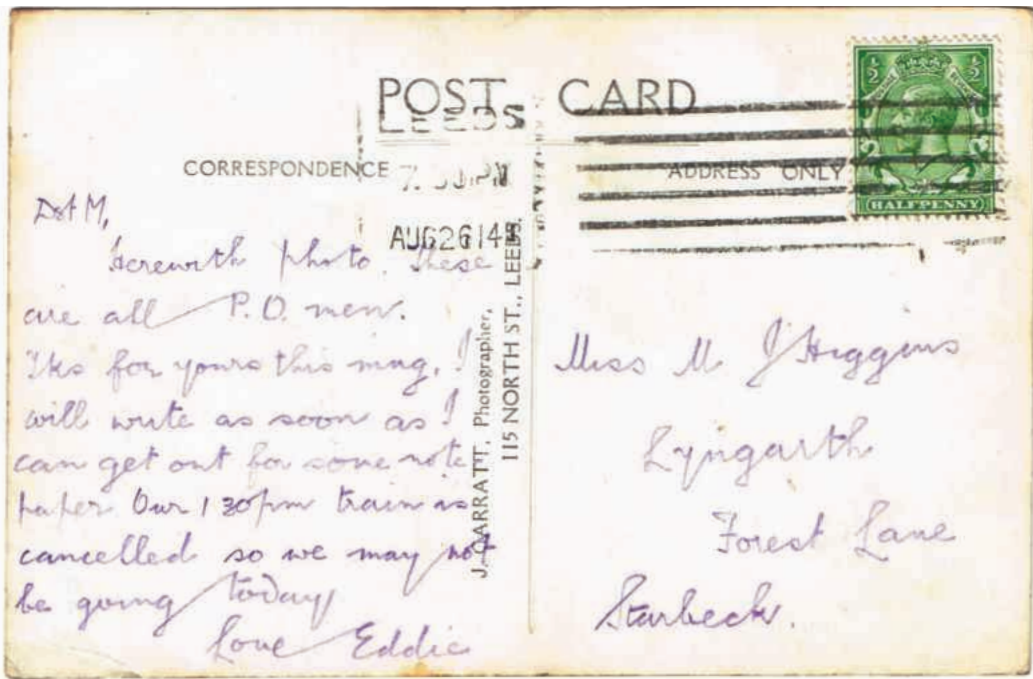
12TH Paraded 7 am. Set out football field in morning. Off in afternoon. Went to Biggleswade, called at Broom and saw the boys. Went to billet in Biggleswade for tea. Went to pictures. Walked home in the rain, and arrived home at 11.20.

13TH Sunday. Paraded 7 am. Marched to Southill to church. Off in afternoon. Prepared for trip to Cambridge. On evening stables at 4.15 pm. On guard at 5.30 pm to 7 am next morning.

14TH Finished at 3 am. Sneaked home for a sleep in bed. Paraded at 7.30 am. Marching orders for four days shooting at Cambridge. Journeyed to Biggleswade in GS Wagons, like Sunday school treat. Left by 9.40 am train. Changed at Sandy. Arrived Cambridge 11 am. Went on range and fired 20 rounds. Billed with three others at Pickrel Inn in Madeline Street. Went to variety in the evening.

15TH Paraded at King's College at 8.30 am. Commenced raining soon after arrival on range. Stopped for rain after 10 rounds. Fired another five rounds and finished at 3 pm. Went to pictures in evening.

16TH Paraded at 8.30 am. Fine day and good light. I improved wonderfully on the range, and secured quite a good score. Received news that my Madge has undergone an operation. I feel I want to be there, and almost regret I am in the Army. I can do very little good at either place. In fact I can only hope and pray. Spent evening reading and writing while the boys were gaming. Had a stroll round the town.



The Post Office Men.
Eddie back row third
from right.

DECEMBER 1914

17TH Paraded at 8.30 am. Am feeling off colour on range, and did not maintain my previous good shooting. Finished up with a score of 197. The top score was 229. Still hope to be in the first 10. Paraded at station 4.15 pm. Train to Biggleswade, and then on foot to Stanford. Have enjoyed shooting, but am glad to get home.

18TH Paraded 7 am. Manipulative practice in signed for transfer to regulars. (My number is 72342). In evening went to band concert in Shefford, given by RE Wester. Arrived home after 11 pm. My transfer to REs was dated 10 December.

19TH Paraded 7 am. Washing a trap in the morning. Off on Saturday afternoon. Walked to Biggleswade in the evening.

20TH Sunday. Paraded at 7 am. Marched to Southill Church after breakfast. Walked to Shefford in the evening. When we returned home heard news that half our section was going to Aldershot for front. Hope I am in it.

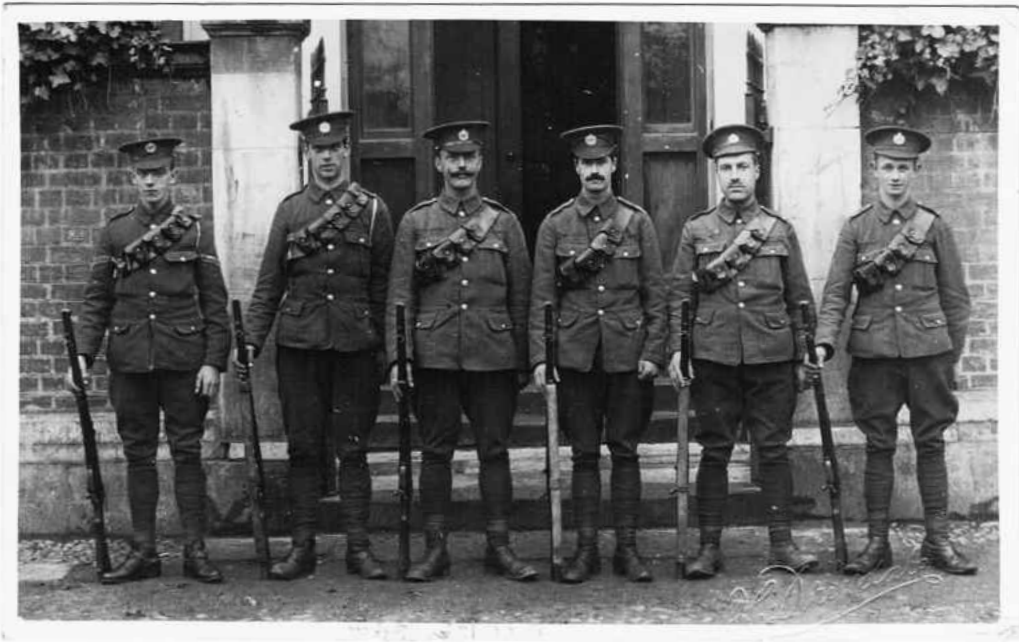
21ST Paraded 7 am. The hours of attendance are to be: parade 7.30 am breakfast 9.15 am dinner. Owing to unknown reasons, leave has been suspended. Stayed in billet in evening.

22ND Paraded 7.30 am. Line guard all day. Went shopping to Shefford in evening.

23RD Paraded 7.30 am. Took base in morning for cable laying detachment. Cleaning harnesses in the afternoon. In evening went down to Shefford to post parcel and get a haircut. We almost ran the gauntlet, because when we left Shefford, all men on leave had been recalled. We arrived at the farm about 9.35 pm, and found that all men had paraded at 7 pm with full kit. They were dismissed at 9.45 pm, and told to parade at 7.30 am as usual. We are probably going for a route march after breakfast. Reckon I have scored a bull's eye tonight, and have not been had for muggins, seeing we are on the eve of developments. Was obliged to sample Madge's cake received this morning. It was OK. The Bedford troops are ready for moving tonight.

24TH Paraded 7.30 am. After breakfast paraded in full marching order, and went for a ride on wagons. Several of the sections met, and our company reached nearly half a mile on the road. Went through Clifton and Shefford. Running cable in afternoon. Walked to Shefford and spent the evening there.

25TH Paraded 7.30 am. Marched to Southill Church. Finished work at 1 pm. Went on evening stables at 4 pm. We organised a little social evening at the billet, and had an enjoyable time. We had good Christmas dinner today, and I think as nice a day as anyone could have away from home.



On guard. Eddie second from right.

DECEMBER 1914

26TH Paraded at 7.30 am. Running wire and making joints in morning. Went out to tea at Sammy Odell's at Shefford with Edgar and Sid. Had a very pleasant evening. Left at 12.30 am.

27TH Sunday. Paraded 7.30 am. Southill Church in morning. Went to bed in afternoon. Stayed in billet in evening.

28TH Paraded 7.30 am. Running wire and making joints in morning and afternoon. Stayed at home in evening.

29TH Paraded 7.30 am. It has been snowing and raining all night. Our farm was flooded, and so were the roads approaching the farm. After breakfast, they asked for two men to dig a trench to clear the water away. Kemp and I volunteered, and we were working up to our knees in water for hours. We quite enjoyed the sport. We found it fairly hard work digging up a flint road. We were dismissed for about two hours, and supplied with some whiskey by the officers. I have been fasting from smoking for a while. Have completed 60 hours, and find it quite long enough to be without a smoke. I needed a rest, because I had been smoking an ounce a day.

30TH Paraded 7.30 am. Took base for E2 Detachment in morning. In afternoon checked stores. Walked to Clifton in evening.

31ST Paraded 7.30 am. Took base of E Detachment. Rained all morning. In the evening had a smoker at the Checkers, Clifton. Finished at 9 pm. Had a very nice time.





Group portrait.
Eddie back row
second from left.

1915

JANUARY

1ST Paraded 7.30 am. Went cable laying through Clifton, Henlow and Langford. Experienced intense cold all morning, and it finished up with ice rain. Upholstering sofa in billet in evening.

2ND Paraded 7.30 am. Cleaning wagons in morning. Finished work at 1 pm. Had sleep in afternoon. Walked to Clifton in the evening.

3RD Paraded 7.30 am. Got permission to attend Wesleyan Chapel at Shefford. Nine of us went. Finished at 1 pm. Reading in afternoon. Walked to Clifton in the evening.

4TH Paraded at 7.30 am. Doing nothing all morning. About 500 RAF passed through Stanford this morning on way to Shefford for five days' manoeuvres. At noon a list of 18 names were read out, and these men are to form a detachment for the front. I am amongst them. Might say I am very pleased. Spent evening at Checker's farewell concert to our two friends in 5th Beds.

5TH Paraded 7.30 am. Took base of cable laying detachment. Picked men for the front paraded before officers, who told us they had previously picked a section, and some men may have to fall out before it is finally settled. We are to have two days leave commencing today, then we shall have a fortnight at Biggleswade. Then to Aldershot, moving off to the front about the end of January or the beginning of February. Went in motor to Biggleswade. Arrived home at 11 pm.

6TH Paraded about 7 am by force of habit. Visited office and saw the boys. Saw Madge in afternoon. Found her looking very nicely. I found it a hardship to be so near and yet so far. Stayed at home in evening.

JANUARY 1915

7TH Paraded about 10.30 am. Spent morning visiting. Saw Madge in afternoon. Stayed quite a long time, but the time spent with my ideal girl passed very quickly, and was far too short. In fact I would like to be with her always. The further I travel, the more convinced I am that Madge is the best girl I have ever known. Went to Leeds at 4.22 pm. Visited Auntie, also Mrs Cameron [*friend of Auntie Maggie*]. Left Leeds at 10.15 pm.

8TH Arrived Biggleswade 4 am. Walked to Stanford. One of the village landladies was up and had some tea ready. Paraded 7.30 am. Took base of cable laying detachment. Cleaning wagons in afternoon.

9TH Paraded 7.30 am. Running wire in morning. Off in afternoon. Had a sleep. Walked as far as Shefford in the evening with a few of the boys.

10TH Sunday. Paraded 7.30 am. Went to Shefford Wesleyan Church in morning. Off duty in afternoon. Hours of parade are to be 6.45, 7.45, 8.45, 2.30, 3.30 and 5. On guard 5.30 pm to 6.45 am.

11TH Paraded at 6.45 am. Was told that Lt. Mawson is to take detachment to front, and Lt. McFarlane is taking a section in six weeks' time. He says I shall go with him and not with the first lot. Marched to Southill for a lecture. We found that no arrangements had been made on our arrival, so we marched back. I had about an hour in the riding school on my return. Dinner at 2.30 pm. Seemed very late. Washing wagons in afternoon.

12TH Paraded at 6.45 am. Lecture at Southill in morning. Cleaning wagons in the afternoon. Stayed in at night.

13TH Paraded 6.45 am. Lecture at Southill in morning. Went to Clifton in evening.

14TH Paraded 6.45 am. Digging holes all morning. Washing wagons in afternoon. Walked to Shefford in evening for haircut. Called to see Odells.

15TH Went to Biggleswade on cycle in the morning. Saw a few of my old friends, and called at old billet. I think all my Harrogate friends seem to have writing jobs. Stayed in billet in the evening.

16TH Paraded 6.45 am. Doing very little work in morning. Finished work at 1 pm. Had a walk to Southill in afternoon. Reading in the evening.

17TH Paraded at 6.45 am. Went to Wesleyan Chapel in Shefford in morning. Finished work at 1 pm. On stables at 4.15 pm. Walked to Biggleswade in evening to see Edgar. Stayed at hospital about two hours. Called at old billet.



POST CARD



COMMUNICATION

ADDRESS ONLY

Det M.
 Tho for yours, pleased
 to learn you are home
 again. Have walked to
 Biggleswade to see Edgar
 tonight. There is a view
 of a neighbouring
 village where the River
 section is stationed.
 Will write on Monday.
 Love Eddie.

Miss M. J. Higgins,
 Lyngarth,
 Forest Lane,
 Starbeck
 Harrogate.

JANUARY 1915

18TH Paraded 6.45 am. Operating on wagon in morning. Went through Stanford, Clifton, Henlow and Arlesey. Had a nice ride, but found it very cold. Washing wagons in afternoon. Went to concert at Little Mission, Clifton in evening.

19TH Paraded at 6.45 am. Took base of cable laying detachment. Base was fixed at White Horse Inn, Southall. Running cable in afternoon. Went to bed early. Seem to have contracted a severe cold.

20TH Paraded 6.45 am. Took base at same place. Replenishing batteries in afternoon. Reading and cleaning up in evening.

21ST Paraded 6.45 am. Took base of E Detachment. Felt very bad all day with severe cold. Washing wagons in afternoon. On guard at 6 pm. Got on fairly well. Commenced snowing at 4.45 am.

22ND Finished guard at 6.45 am. Paraded at 6.45 am. Took base of cable laying detachment. Got very wet. Raining heavily all day. Went to prize distribution at Wesley Sunday School in the evening.

23RD Got a bad cold in chest and head. On line guard all day. Felt very seedy. Finished at 6 pm. Retired at 8 pm.

24TH Sunday. Paraded at 7 am. Running wire all morning. Finished at 1 pm. Spent afternoon reading and writing.

25TH Paraded 6 am. Went with foreign detachment to Biggleswade to give an exhibition of cable laying, and to be inspected by Colonel Godfrey Fausset. I took base in tent on roadside. The verdict was that we had done very well, and that we shall be moved to Aldershot as soon as possible.

26TH Paraded 6 am. Took wagon of cable laying detachment. Went from Southill through Stanford and Shefford. Had walk through Clifton and Henlow in evening.

27TH Paraded at 6 am. Running wire in morning and afternoon. Reading in evening.

28TH Paraded 6 am. Digging and moving gravel all morning. Washing wagons in afternoon. Went to Clifton in the evening.

29TH Paraded 6 am. Running wire in morning. In riding school also. It is cruel but I did not get thrown. Cleaning harnesses in afternoon. Writing and reading in evening.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1915

30TH Paraded at 6 am. In riding school in morning. Saddles sans stirrups. Had a rough time. Off duty in the afternoon. Had a walk as far as Clifton to Post Office. Went to Clifton in the evening with the boys.

31ST Paraded 7 am. Went to Shefford Wesleyan in morning. Had sleep in the afternoon. On stables 4.45 to 5 pm. On guard at 6 pm. Nice clear evening.

FEBRUARY

1ST Paraded 6 am. At 7 am 18 men moved off to Biggleswade to wait orders prior to going to Aldershot. I was not amongst them. We received about 30 new men and a lot of horses. Took wagon off cable laying detachment. Went from Southill through Old Warden and Ickwell Green on to Dead Man's Oak. Washing wagons in afternoon. Spent evening with Haithwaite at his billet.

2ND Paraded 6 am. Operating on wagon, same journey as yesterday. Making up batteries in afternoon. Spent evening at home.

3RD Paraded 6 am. Stayed in camp in the morning, making battery leads. The corps has to furnish 24 vibrator telegraphists for immediate removal to Aldershot, and from there overseas at an early date. I put in an application which was backed by the officer. In evening, went to Clifton with two of the new boys.

4TH Paraded 6 am. Repairing motor car engines in the morning, and making up batteries.

5TH Paraded 6 am. Signwriting and painting all day. On guard in the evening.

6TH Went to Biggleswade in GS wagon and attended lecture on cable work by Colonel Geoffrey Fausset. Finished at 2 pm. Felt very seedy all day, so went to bed in the afternoon. Slept until 6 am Sunday morning.

7TH Paraded 7 am. Next parade at 9.45 am. Went to Shefford Wesleyan Church. Spent afternoon and evening reading. Turned out a wet night.

8TH Paraded 6 am. Took No. 4 duty in cable detachment, but was called back to farm to operate to NCO at Southill. Washing wagons in afternoon. Went to Clifton shopping in the evening.

9TH Paraded at 6 am. Operating in guard room all morning. Was pleased to have the job, because it was a very wet morning. Washing wagons in the afternoon, reading in the evening.



POST CARD

COMMUNICATION ADDRESS ONLY

Miss Higgins,
 Lyngarth,
 Forest Lane
 Starbeck
 Harrogate.

Not ill.
 We had a very
 successful inspection on
 Monday and the Col. was
 very pleased with us. He
 is going to move us to
 Aldershot as soon as for.
 Hope you are still
 improving. Will write to
 you soon. Love
 Thomas nearest Rd. Love
 Thomas

FEBRUARY 1915

10TH Took wagon of cable laying detachment. Went from Southill through Ireland and Haynes to West End. Repairing instruments in afternoon. Reading in the evening.

11TH Paraded 6 am. Operating in guard room. In Stanford in morning. Cleaning wagons in afternoon. On guard at 6 pm.

12TH Finished guard at 6 am. Operating in guard room in morning, and cleaning wagons in the afternoon.

13TH Paraded 6 am. Greasing wagon wheels in morning. Off in afternoon. Went to Clifton in the evening.

14TH Paraded at 7 am. Cleaning and oiling wagons in morning. Finished at 1 pm. Reading and sleeping in afternoon. Went to Clifton in the evening.

15TH Paraded 7 am. Two detachments picked for the front? An operator has to do No. 5 duty. It will be manual labour when the wagon is moving, and operating at the end of the journey. I am rather pleased, because one can keep warm while moving. I took No. 5 duty in E Detachment. We laid cable through Stanford, Clifton, Henlow and Edworth. Stayed at home in the evening and did a bit of telegraphy.

16TH Paraded at 6 am. The two detachments to be inspected by Major Bowman Manifold to be passed for the front. I did No. 5. We got on fairly well. I am not too sanguine, because we had some inexperienced men on some of the jobs. Had some friends over from Biggleswade in the evening.

17TH Paraded 6 am. Checked stores and handing over cable wagon to other section in morning. No work to do after breakfast. Checking stores in afternoon. Reading and writing in the evening.

18TH Paraded 6 am. Am on stable picket all day. Took No. 5 duty in morning. We laid two miles of cable in Biggleswade. It was fixed to trees, houses and telegraph poles. I had rough time climbing poles and trees. Finished line picket at 6 pm, then on guard until 6 am following morning.

19TH Paraded 6 am. At 8 am went to Biggleswade to work our wire in NAR office. Came off duty at 2.30 pm. Went to billet, 10 Cemetery Street. Went to bed 6 pm to 9 pm. On duty at 10 pm till 6 am. NAR means 13th Army, N being the 13th letter in the alphabet, and AR code for 'Army'. My set is a vibrator, but there are also SC and DC sets, and Wheatstones.

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1915

20TH Finished work at 6 am. Off all morning, met many old friends. Went to bed 2 pm until 8.30 pm. Hadn't to go on duty, so went to the pictures.

21ST Sunday. Off all day. What a holiday it seems! Edgar and I took the linesmen's horses out for exercise. We did about 10 miles. It was fine to have a horse on one's own. We both had good horses, and quite a lot of trotting and galloping. Went boating in the afternoon. Spent evening at Mrs Izzard's, my former billet.

22ND On duty at 1 pm. Finished at 6 pm. Went to pictures in the evening.

23RD Saw a section of our line move off to the front, and Divisional Cable Section to Aldershot. Wish I had been going. On duty at 1 pm at NAR. Stayed at home in the evening.

24TH Reading up Army telegraphy in morning. On duty 1 pm to 6 pm. Went to St George's pictures in the evening.

25TH Reading up Army telegraphy in morning. Hope to be in a position to ask for a raise when we return to Stanford. Technical knowledge is not much use in cable company though. Working 1 pm to 6 pm. Went to Stanford (cycled) in the evening.

26TH Had a walk in the morning, and played billiards. On duty at 1 pm. Left for Biggleswade on foot at 2.15 pm. Running wire in afternoon. On guard 6 pm. to 6 am. Rough weather.

27TH Paraded at 6 am. Running wire all morning. Finished at 2 pm. Sleeping in afternoon. Swotting Army telegraphy in evening.

28TH Running wire all morning. Finished at 1 pm. On stables 4 to 5 pm. Went to Clifton Mission in the evening.

MARCH

1ST Paraded 5.30 am. Left at 7.45 am for Biggleswade. Had 12 miles of wire to lay in three hours. We worked from Big through Potton, Everton and Tempsford to Boxton. On return journey, we placed the wire on trees and poles. The weather was very bad. We had hail, rain and snow. I was up telegraph poles during the storm. We arrived at Biggleswade at 5.15 pm. I had tea, and then went on operating 6 pm to 10 pm. My relief arrived at 11 pm. I went to kip at Mrs Handscombes, 10 Cemetery Road.

2ND Arose ad lib at 8 am. Waited until 12 noon to return to Stanford in GS wagon. Spent afternoon cleaning wagon. Reading and writing in the evening.

MARCH 1915

3RD Paraded 7 am. Left for Biggleswade at 8 am to reel in 12 miles of wire laid on Monday. Two of us cleared three miles of wire on foot. I was equipped with a long crooked stick and climbing irons. We finished at 11.45 am and waited in Biggleswade until wagon arrived. It was a warm morning and raining heavily. I returned to Stanford on a horse. Finished work at 6.30 pm.

4TH Paraded 6 am. At 8 am went to Biggleswade along with other operators and linesmen. We took full kit. We attended a lecture at NAR Headquarters office. We had to receive instructions each day. Secured billet at 10 Cemetery Road. Went to pictures in the evening.

5TH Turned up at 8.30 am. We did some practical technical work on our own. Finished at 1 pm. Stamping identity discs for soldiers. Spent evening at Liberal Club.

6TH Commenced at 8.30 am. Did some technical telegraphy in morning. Finished at 1pm. We haven't an instructor who knows anything about telegraphy. I have had to instruct our boys a little.

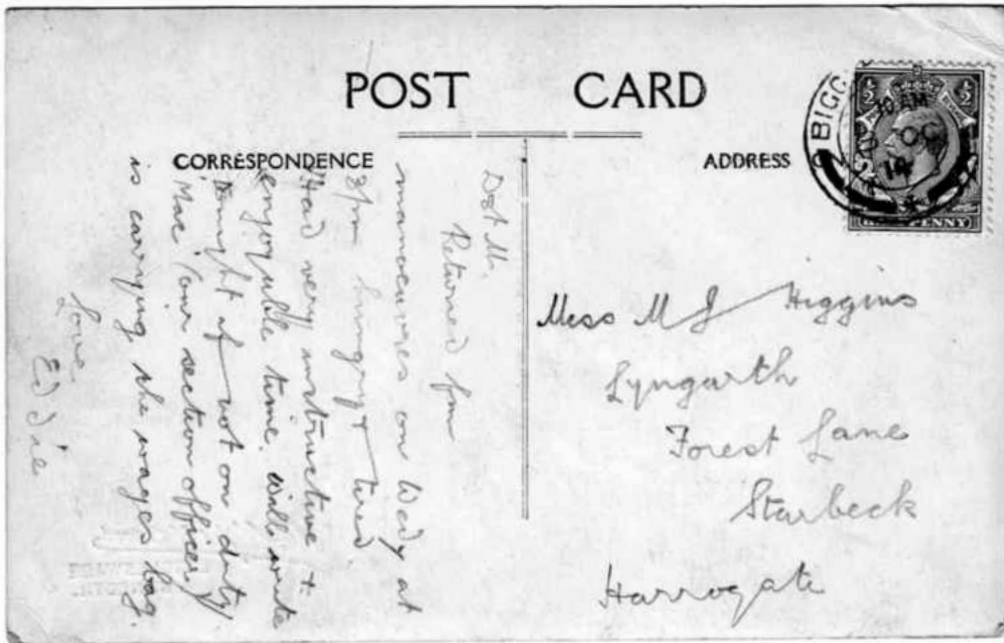
7TH Paraded at 9.30 am for Church. Finished for the day at 11 am. In afternoon went to Stanford to tea. Returned at 10.30 pm.

8TH Paraded 8.30 am. At telegraphy class in morning. No instruments for us, so there was no work done. Paraded at 3.30 pm. Attended a short lecture on the care of horses. Went to stables in Oldfield. Finished at 5 pm.

9TH Paraded 6 am. Grooming for an hour. Next parade at 8.30 am for operation at NAR office. Dismissed at 12.30 pm. Paraded at 4 pm for night cable laying. Inspected in Market Street at 6 pm. Our section was complimented by Colonel. Left at 6.30 pm, and laying cable through Dunton, Eyeworth and Wrestlingworth. Got orders to reel up at midnight. Arrived in Big 3 am. Dismissed 4.30 am.

10TH Paraded 10 am. Working hard in field until 2.30 pm. Working at NAR 3.30 to 4.30 pm. On guard at field for 12 hours commencing 5 am. Am sitting over a fire in a bucket suspended on a tripod of cable poles. I feel generally fed up for want of rest. We are working harder than they do at the front. Finished guard at 6 am. Paraded at 8am. Assisted in making a road to our stables in morning. In afternoon taking over and checking cable wagons for an inspection tomorrow. Went to pictures in the evening.

11TH Paraded at 6 am. At 8 am went to Broom and laid cable. Our work was inspected by Colonel Fausset and Colonel Manfield. The senior colonel said that out of five signal units he had inspected, it was the smartest cable section



Bringing the wages back to camp.

MARCH 1915

he had seen. In afternoon we were putting stores away, swotting Army telegraphy in the evening.

12TH Paraded 7 am. Signwriting in morning. Also in riding school. Got on very nicely. Finished work at 1 pm. Writing letters in afternoon. Went to pictures in evening.

13TH Paraded 7 am. Signwriting in morning. Also in riding school. Got on very nicely. Finished work at 1 pm. Writing letters in afternoon. Went to pictures in evening.

14TH Sunday. Paraded 7.30 am. Church parade 9.30 am. Finished work at 1 pm. Went boating in afternoon. Out at a pal's house in the evening.

15TH Paraded at 6 am. Second parade at 8 am in full marching order. Had one hour in riding school. I feel quite safe on a horse now, although there is quite a lot to learn about horses. I quite enjoy the circus now, and feel that riding is one of the pleasures of a soldier's life. I spent the rest of the day marking equipment. Spent two hours cleaning up at night. Did some telegraphy.

16TH Paraded 6 am. Riding school in morning. Enjoyed it, but kicked on the foot. It turned out all right though. Marking equipment in afternoon. Swotting in evening.

17TH Paraded at 6 am. Riding school in morning. Had a fine time. Cleaning harnesses and grooming rest of day. On guard 5.30 pm.

18TH Finished guard at 6 am. Riding school in morning. Grooming etc. all day. Went to pictures in evening.

19TH Paraded 6 am. At 8.30 am attended general parade with full kit. Made out pay books for active service. News came this morning that we are to move off in a few days, and in consequence we were all given 48 hours' leave. Finished work at about 4.30 pm. Left by train at 5.28 pm. Arrived home at 11 pm.

20TH Had a nice day. Spent most of the time with Madge.

21ST Slept in till 10.30 am. Went to see Madge in afternoon. Was sorry to say goodbye. I am not tired of the Army, but there are times when one likes to get away from the coarse and vulgar life in the Army. Left Harrogate at 4.21 pm.

[This was the last time that Eddie would see Madge until his discharge from the service in 1919]

MARCH/APRIL 1915

22ND Arrived at Biggleswade at 2.30 am, and had two hours' sleep. Paraded at 6 am. Riding school in morning. Had rough time and felt rather stiff and tired. Was working on the newly-in wagons all afternoon. Went to bed early.

23RD Paraded 6.30 am. Worked in blacksmith's shop in morning. On parade at 2.30 am till 4 am for company drill and inspection by the Major. Working on new wagons till 6 pm. All gears and wheels have been adjusted and greased. Went to pictures in evening.

24TH Paraded at 6.30 am. In morning cleaned gears of new wagons. Hour's drill in afternoon. In evening went to Stanford, Clifton and Shefford to bid friends goodbye.

25TH Paraded 6.30 am. Lettering new wagons in morning. Marking new kit in afternoon. Got a nasty touch of cold with working in wet fields. Went to bed early.

26TH Paraded 6.30 am. Marking new kit in morning. Same in afternoon. We were doing the job in an old malt kiln, and had no fire. On guard at Royal Oak at 5.30 am. Found it very cold, and could get warm neither on nor off duty.

27TH Finished guard at 6 am and dismissed until 8.30 am parade. Worked in stores again until 5 pm. Went to pictures in the evening.

28TH Paraded 7.30 am. Marking kit till 1 pm. Had sleep in afternoon. Walked to Landy over the common in evening. Returned by road.

29TH Paraded 6.30 am. Marking kit all day. Finished at 5.30 am. Stayed in at night.

30TH Paraded 6.30 am. Worked in stores all day. Was served out with a head protector, also a very fine silver watch. There are only six supplied to the section, so I was very fortunate. Spent evening at Liberal Club.

31ST Paraded 6.30 am. Lettering wagons and assisting with stores. Received new equipment. Spent evening fitting equipment.

APRIL

1ST Paraded 6.30 am. Lettering wagons during the day. Received billet allowance of 3/6d and pay 18/-. We have heard today that we leave on Thursday next, and sail on 10th. Am going to be examined for second rate of pay in a few days. Studying in the evening.

APRIL 1915

2ND Good Friday. Paraded 7.30 am. Church parade at 9.30 am. After church went for a route march. Finished stables at 1 pm. Spent afternoon boating. On picket at 5.30 pm.

3RD Finished guard at 6.30 am. Dismissed until 8.30 am. Signwriting in morning. Had a sleep in afternoon. Went to pictures in evening.

4TH Paraded 7.30 am. Church parade at 9.30 am. Signwriting in morning. Had a sleep in afternoon. Walked to Langford, Henlow and Stanford in the evening. Said goodbye to friends there.

5TH Paraded 6.30 am. Packed stores all day. Spent evening at Izzard's, my old billet.

6TH Paraded 6.30 am. Signwriting on new motor wagons all day. Went to farewell dinner at Two Brewers in evening.

7TH Heard we had to leave on Sunday for Avonmouth. Spent day signwriting. Had a bath in the evening, and packed a lot of kit.

8TH Paraded 6.30 am. Assisted with packing stores in morning. Saw a motor transporter leave. It consisted of about 20 motors. Signwriting all day. Packing up at night.

9TH Paraded 6.30 am. Packing stores all day. Shopping and getting ready for departing.

10TH Paraded 6.30 am. Packing stores in morning. Finished work at 1.30 pm. Spent afternoon packing ready for moving off. On guard 5.30 am until 7.30 am, Sunday at Stables, Royal Oak Inn.

11TH Paraded for Church at 9.30 am. Finished work at 1 pm. Had sleep in afternoon and evening.

12TH Paraded at 6.30 am. Painting all day. Stayed at home in evening.

13TH Paraded 6.30 am. Signwriting and painting all day. We hear we will go away tomorrow. Hope it is right. We have hardly any faith left, after being disappointed so many times.

14TH Paraded 6.30 am. Commenced packing stores in morning. Put kit bags in train. Paraded at 12.50 pm. Full marching order, and after an inspection, left for the station. Left at 3.30 pm for Avonmouth, passing through the counties of Bedford, Hants., Oxford and Wilts. We arrived at 9 pm, and after

APRIL 1915

a lot of hard work, got on board at 1 am. Our horses and wagons are going on the *Esmeraldas*. We embark on *SS Nile* of Hong Kong. It is a passenger steamer fitted for troops.

15TH Had a good sleep in a hammock, but we are crowded. Got up at 6 am, breakfast at 8 am, and we were ready for it, as we had not had any food since 11.30 am yesterday. Had a walk round the docks, and saw a Canadian ship arrive with remounts. Had a similar walk in afternoon. At 7 pm we set sail together with three other troop ships. I turned in about 9 pm in order to secure my hammock. There are dozens of fellows without sleeping accommodation. The food today has been good, but insufficient. We always feel hungry. The troops in this ship number about 1,500 I think, and are composed of REs, Army Service Corps and Middlesex Yeomanry. There are some very fine fellows in the latter company. We anchored in the Channel a few miles from Avonmouth. I am very favourably impressed with life on board. It is very rough, and every man for himself, but I seem to be able to look after No. 1. We seem to have very little work except looking for meals. This boat is officered by Yankees and manned by Chinese. The crew are very interesting. Their food consists of rice for every meal. It is eaten from basins by chop sticks.

16TH Reveille at 6 am. We were soon showing a leg. I was given the job of mess orderly. There are two orderlies to 21 men. The duties are to draw food, wash up etc. I got down for breakfast rations fairly early and then had to wait an hour. We had coffee, steak, bread and porridge. It was an improvement on the previous day's fare. The food improved, but it took a lot of getting, and I was on the go all day. In the evening I was on the fo'c'sle, reading morse light signals from the coast. We appear to have Weston-super-Mare on the south bank and Newport Mon. opposite. Six boats which accompanied us sailed in the evening, but we had no orders. I turned in about 9 pm quite contented.

17TH Reveille went at 5.45 am. We paraded at 9.30 am with full marching order, and spent the time learning semaphore and flag signalling. I did not seem to make much progress, as I had missed a lesson the previous day. It is difficult to pick up. Did some signalling in afternoon. Two destroyers steamed up towards evening, and we sailed about 8 pm, at which time we all had to be in bed.

18TH Sunday. Woke up at 6 am, and found ourselves well out to sea. The escort had left us. Many men were sick. I stuck it well all day. In consequence I had plenty of good feeds. The weather was ideal, blue sea, blue skies and a cap full of wind, and also plenty of sun. We steered a westerly and south-westerly course all morning, and this seemed to keep us out of the Bay of Biscay. We were rolling very much. I spent part of morning on second class deck and

APRIL 1915

some time on fo'c'sle. In afternoon I borrowed a book and did a little reading on second class deck. We had a service this morning, but there is very little on the decks. The Chinamen have come on the fo'c'sle to have their tea. It consists of rice and meat, which is eaten with chop sticks. Spent evening on the fo'c'sle. It was quite warm. It appears we did not enter the bay until 8 pm. We were too far out to sight land. Our ship began to roll very badly, and we have one of the worst parts to sleep in, i.e. the fo'c'sle. I seem to have gained my sea legs and am now quite indifferent to the rolling. Turned in at 8.30 pm.

19TH Up about 6.15 am. Weather a trifle dull, but still fine. Sea rough. I ate a good breakfast, had a signalling class in the morning. The meals seem to be improving, and we get plenty of variety. We are still steaming along without escort, but our course is south to south-west, keeping well away from the coast. Had a sleep on the fo'c'sle in afternoon. Practically the whole of the decks are covered with men sleeping and reading. Turned in about 8.30 pm.

20TH Up about 6 am. The sea is fairly rough, and our boat is noted for rolling. Somehow it has not affected me, and I don't care if it loops the loop. We begin to feel the warm climate this morning. No doubt we are off Portugal. Spent afternoon reading and sleeping. We only sighted four vessels all day.

21ST Up about 6 am. Very fine bright day, and sea quite calm. Quite different to what it has been the last few days. About 11 am we sighted land on the Portuguese side, and shortly after the Morocco side. Both sides presented a rugged aspect. We passed a village on the south side. The lower slopes of the hills and mountains are covered with grass. About 2 pm we sighted the Rock of Gibraltar. It is a huge rugged mass, about 1,000 feet high. There is a low-lying strip of land joining it to the mainland. The Mediterranean side has a flat slope of concrete. We were not near enough to see more. During the day I saw some whales in the distance. They came up to the surface and blew out clouds of spray. We also saw porpoises and dolphins towards evening. It came on very cold, and we lost sight of the land.

In the afternoon we attended a lecture given by medical officer. He gave us some good hints about our health in a hot country. It appears that one can easily be on the sick list through ignorance. I had a sea-water shower bath and retired at 8.30 pm. We received pith helmets today. Each helmet is accompanied by a pugree, which is a kind of muslin 15 yds. by 1 ft. This has to be put round the hat in tucks. I got on with the hat trimming fairly well, and completed about four helmets.

22ND Up at about 6 am. To my surprise, the sea was rough, and there was an east gale. The boat rolled very much all morning. We were learning signals on

APRIL 1915

boat deck in morning. Towards evening, the sea became very rough. I felt very sickly, so retired about 7 pm.

23RD Up at 6 am. I was mess orderly again. We saw some of the African coast about 8 am. I managed some breakfast this morning, but felt very seedy after washing up. I had an attack of mal de mer. It is a nasty thing, but one can hardly avoid it at this part of the boat. Our room has a kind of launching and rolling motion. I have been somewhat disappointed with the Mediterranean. I had a picture of a calm blue sea with hardly a breeze. Instead it is more rough than the Bay of Biscay. Many of the men are feeling fed up. Some of them are without money. Money is not really necessary though. Those who have brought a good supply are only wasting it on extras. We get plenty of good food. I believe I have about 4/- left. It will last until we arrive in Alexandria. We passed Cap de Fer, past the island of Galeta (where St Paul was wrecked) about 5 pm. Was also in sight of the African coast. We sailed along in sight of the African coast. Night came on very suddenly.

24TH Up about 6 am. Time keeps altering about an hour each day. We had physical drill and signalling in the morning. About noon we came in sight of the island of Gozo, which is close to Malta.

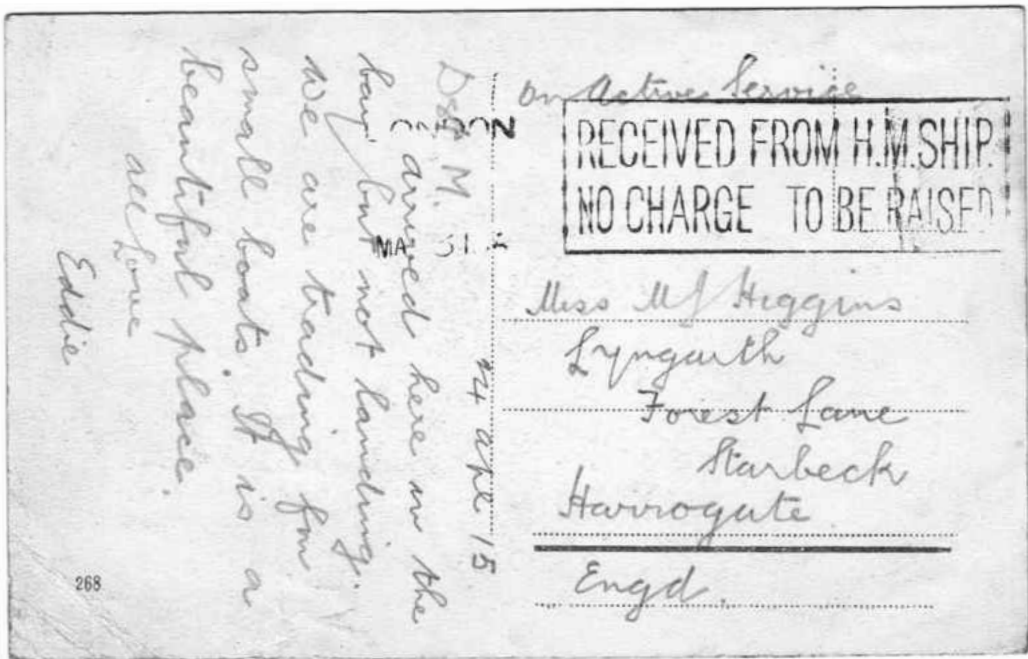
We sailed along the coast observing the scenery. It was hilly, and Eastern villages and towns were dotted on the hillsides. These flat topped houses, with occasional domes and mosques present a fine appearance. We arrived at Valetta harbour, Malta, about 1.30 pm.

We had not been anchored a minute before we were besieged by dozens of small boats who came selling fruit, cigarettes, tobacco and almost everything a soldier would buy, but they did a large trade. I bought 1 lb of tobacco for 1/- and 60 cigarettes for 6d. We had tea, and feel like Moses viewing the promised land. I would give a lot for a few hours ashore, but only officers are allowed to land. The harbour is lively. There are four French gun boats and one destroyer here. We gave them a cheer when they passed in steam launches. It is hard to give a good description of the houses lining the harbour, but they have flat roofs, and look decidedly Eastern. Some are painted green or red. The colour of the sea was very remarkable. When we slowed up it was a deep azure blue. It was no reflection of the sky, and one would expect it to be blue if put into a glass. As we steamed into harbour, it turned green. The island must be about 40 or 50 miles long. The coloured lights on shore look fine. It is a big hardship that we are kept on board. Turned in at 9 pm.

25TH Sunday. Up at 6 am. The natives are still plying their trade. They are a lot of thieves, and it is well to give them half what they ask for goods. We have not seen much costume. They are dressed in European clothes. We set sail



— Birds Eye View, W.



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Miss M. Higgins
Lyngarth
Forest Lane
Starbeck
Havrogate
Engd.

24 APR 15
D. M. Higgins
MA 51

arrived here in the
day but not landing.
We are trading for
small boats. It is a
beautiful place.

*all love
Eddie*

268

The excitement of arriving.

APRIL 1915

about 7.30 am. *The Toronto*, which left Avonmouth the night before us came into harbour as we sailed out. There was no church service today. I spent all my time on the boat deck, which is the top of all. We have some hammock chairs up there. It is remarkable that our boat has travelled without an escort since leaving the Bristol Channel. We are all hard up for reading matter, but I manage to borrow a book now and again. Retired at 9 pm.

26TH Up at 6 am. We are losing sleep because the time keeps getting earlier. Sea very calm, and sun very hot. Had to wear pith helmet in morning because it was so hot. Were tested in semaphore in the afternoon. We had some sports. The sea is very calm today and very blue. Had a sleep in the afternoon. Retired about 8.30 pm.

27TH Up about 6 am. I am on guard today, two hours on and four hours off for 24 hours. Sighted land about 4 pm. It was low lying. Steamed into Alexandria dock at 6.30 pm. This is a place of about 300,000 inhabitants. There are dozens of steamers in port. There is plenty of Eastern costume about. The men wear a kind of Turkish cap. The sky is pink in colour and looks quite tropical. There are also tropical palm trees growing on the shore. No troops landed tonight. I got very little sleep, as people were very busy all night.

28TH 4 to 6 am I am on guard at the gangway to dock. Hope to see some natives if it comes light. Seen plenty of men and boys. They are dressed like women. Some wear the fez, and some a kind of turban. They go in for bright colours such as blue and red. The natives are begging for bread, selling papers and oranges. There are hundreds of horses and mules picketed on the quays. It is reported we are going to Chatby today. Everything is bustle and rush. The REs are disembarking the last. I have about 1 cwt of kit. We did about an hour's fatigue work in the morning. It was dock labourer's work.

We had dinner on board, then paraded at 2.30 pm with all our kit. The Army treated us for once. Our overcoats and kit bags were taken to camp in transport wagon. We had to march four miles in hot sun. We got through all right, though I am full of impressions today. We left docks, and were soon walking in dusty roads, and our boots were white over. We passed through streets for four miles. The people are idle, and seem to work very steadily. The Egyptians we have met were dressed in gay colours, most of the men wearing the Turk's cap or fez. Their colours varied from light copper to jet black. The black men came from Sudan, and I think are Nubians. On our journey we had a half hour's rest, and fortunately got talking to two young Egyptians. They seemed better class lads. I got to know nearly all I wanted to know for the time being. There are two kinds of people, named the Coptics and the Moslems. The people of the latter religion would welcome the return of the Turks to Egypt. The Moslem women veil their faces when out walking.

APRIL/MAY 1915

We arrived at Chatby les Bains, a seaside resort about 5.30 pm. Ripley and I made tea for about 90 men. It was late when we finished, and I am writing this under difficulties after lights out. Our camp is a waste of sand, and sand seems to get over everything. We are in tents, 11 men to each tent. I am very tired tonight, so I am just having a smoke and then turning in. I am charmed with all the sights. The people are indolent, and seem to be trying to make out of us on every turn. I only have 9d, so they won't cheat me much. There are thousands of flies about, and we have to be careful about refuse. It is very hot, and we have to be careful to keep our arms and head covered. I enjoyed sleeping in a tent.

29TH I acted as cook for breakfast, and made some spiffing tea. The other food consisted of bully beef and hard biscuits. It was OK. We are going for a route march now, so hope to see some of the city. We are enjoying our walk and just having a rest. The heat and sun are awful. We have passed through a residential quarter. There are hundreds of beautiful mansions, built of cement, beautifully moulded. The foliage is fine. There are palms, date trees and many more, which have a tropical appearance. The flowers are very fine. The natives are always around us selling oranges and lemons. I am getting to understand the money. The natives are always on the right side when giving change. Went on bathing parade in the sea in afternoon. Got paid 100 piastres, worth £1 os 6d. It was a great relief. In the evening we were allowed out 7.30 pm to 10 pm. I had a walk round the city and made a few purchases. Everything is very dear.

30TH Up about 6 am. Two of us are cooking. We have now started getting proper food, so I have very little spare time. Had just commenced cutting up for dinner when order came to strike camp. We left about noon, and came to the docks in motors. We are to go on *SS Esmeraldas*, possibly to Lemnos. We got tea and bread and bully on the docks for dinner. I sent two packets of views home, also a PC, and the postman wrote a message in Arabic for me. I have just been talking to some black men from Abyssinia Bearer Corps, and also some Gurkas. They are coming on our boat. They carry a carving knife. We are allowed on shore from 6 pm to 9 pm. Four of us had a look round the town and got lost. Did not reach the ship till 9.40 pm. There have been in dock several Red Cross boats of wounded Australians from the Dardanelles. They number about 6,000, and have had a rough time.

MAY

1ST Up at 6.30 am. The sleeping is rather crowded, and the bad air has given us sore throats. The food is fine. We see soldiers and people from all over the world. There are Australians, Canadians, Egyptians, Gurkas, Abyssinians, French, Arabs, English, Scots, Hindus and Chinese. It is a wonderful experi-

MAY 1915

ence to be mixing with all these people. We have come out on the docks. Some of the soldiers are swimming, but the water looks dirty. The natives are busy selling their goods. They usually stock oranges, nuts, Egyptian Turkish Delight and figs. It is not wise to eat much fruit, and one has to be careful about drinking lemonade owing to the bad water which is used. We had an excellent dinner, and the cooking is fine. We sailed about 1.30 pm, soon out to sea. This boat is not as fast as the *Nile*, but more steady. We are making for the Dardanelles, I think. We sighted several ships about 8 pm. Went to kip at 8.30 pm.

2ND Up at 6 am. Was put on fatigue work, assisting the steward with stores. It was very interesting work, and the job was accompanied by meals the same as first class. We sighted land about noon, and continued to pass islands on both sides. We are in the Adriatic Sea. These islands, which appear to be inhabited, are huge rocky masses, devoid of vegetation and life. No doubt we are in the danger zone, but it seems no different to being anywhere else. We are to arrive at a point south of the Dardanelles by tomorrow evening, and there await instructions about landing. There are no docks, so the job will be difficult. I did all my washing and had a bath, so I am quite ready to land. Turned in at 8.30 pm.

3RD Up at 6 am. We keep seeing land on both port and starboard sides. We have very poor hammocks on this boat, and we wake up very tired. On same job today. We kept sighting barren islands all day. About 3 pm sighted what I took to be Lemnos, with Asia on the opposite side. The coast on the Asiatic side showed traces of having been bombarded. There were many large transport ships in the strait or bay, into which we sailed. [*This place was Mudros Bay, Lemnos. There was no Asiatic coast.*] There were also some battle ships and destroyers. I was working fairly late. I don't mind, seeing we get saloon food.

4TH Up at about 5.30 am. We had set off for the Dardanelles about 4.30 am. We could hear the big guns as soon as we got on deck. They seem to be bombarding in real earnest. There is rocky land on each side of us. It is very barren. There seems to be nothing but a little grass growing. We haven't had permission to post any letters, so I am getting the steward to post some cards in Alexandria. We arrived at entrance to the Dardanelles about 9.30 am. Dozens of men of war and transport ships about and camps on shore. The firing could be heard more distinctly. The vessels will no doubt number 100. The land is hilly and sandy. It seems no different to be in the firing zone. By the looks of things we are in for some marches across a dreary country. There is no decent place to land, but the field REs will probably arrange something. It is reported that one headquarter section has gone back to Alexandria. In that case, we may be working on our own. We can see the flash of the guns as they fire. They are giving somebody beans. There is a man of war about three quarters

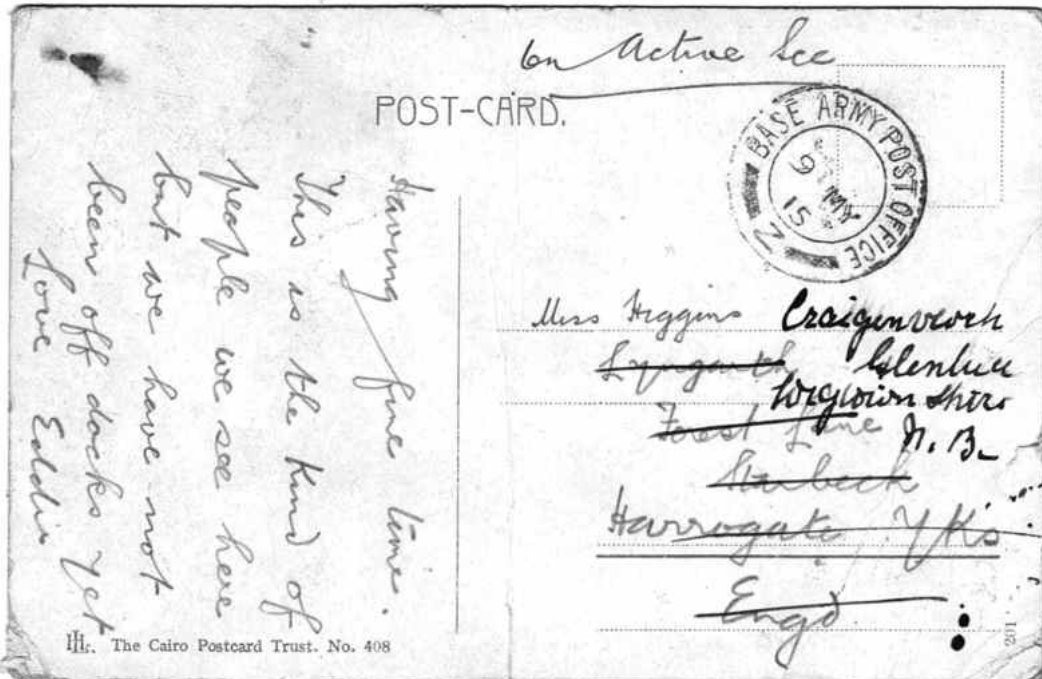
MAY 1915

of a mile from us, firing into the Asiatic side of the Dardanelles. We see a flash, then a few seconds after there is a loud report, which is followed by a noise like thunder. After that there is the noise of a shell rushing through the air. It sounds like the noise made by a tramcar. We can sometimes see a cloud of smoke on shore where the shell has fallen, but it is impossible to see any troops or forts. The peculiar part about the whole thing is that we are just spectators, and there seems to be no danger. On the European or left side, there is a fort which has been demolished, and troops are encamped there. The firing continues all day. Our Headquarters section are out here on a ship. It appears their transport motors have gone astray. I got two letters, one from Madge and one from Gladys [*his sister*]. I was very pleased to receive them. In the evening it was the sight of a lifetime. There were hundreds of lights from the ships, and frequent flashes from the guns, which kept up a continuous fire. Went to bed at 9 pm.

5TH Up at 5.30 am. The bombardment commenced with the dawn. We seem to have some land batteries, but there has been no big advance. It is marvellous what science is used in the matter. Each man of war has a duplicate or dummy which generally goes to draw the enemy fire. There is signalling between the ships by flags (semaphore, morse and international codes) by wireless and heliograph. An aeroplane does the scouting. Spent most of my time working today. The firing ceased about noon, but commenced again about tea time. A chill wind began to blow, and it came in quite rough on the water. The enemy seemed to get our range, and I saw several shells from the asiatic coast drop into the sea. They went quite near some of the boats, but we were from one to four miles away. In the evening firing continued, and our ships sent up from time to time a rocket with a balloon attachment. As soon as the rocket neared the enemy's camp, it broke into a bright searchlight and showed up the surrounding country.

6TH Up at 6 am. Firing continued all day, and became very heavy in the afternoon. The sea was rough and the air fairly cold. One section of cable left for the shore about noon. I don't know when we shall go. The troops do not seem to have made much headway on land. The *Queen Elizabeth* is here. She has some very big guns, and her firing can be heard above all the others. There is a three-funnelled liner here named the *France*. It is carrying French troops. In peacetime, this steamer runs in the New York trade. It is said to be the finest steamer in the world as regards fittings etc.

7TH Up at 6 am. Two lighters alongside to take our cable wagons. The wagons were put on the lighters and then took off. Our warships have gone a little way up the gulf of Saros, and are shelling the ports at Gallipoli. There was very heavy fire going on in the afternoon. They are firing about 60 shells a minute, and when a shell costs £300 it must be a very expensive process.



MAY 1915

Firing continued until late in the evening. We saw a searchlight working. I think it was sweeping over the ships to detect any hostile aircraft.

8TH Up at 6 am. We were moved towards the land about 7 am. We expect to get a better view of the firing today. There seems to have been a hot battle this morning. We are firing thousands of shells, and endeavouring to take a mountain on the Gallipoli Peninsula. We do not appear to be doing much on the asiatic side of the Dardanelles. I should think that the battle which has been raging for the past few days is one of the biggest artillery duels in history. Between 5 and 7 pm the battle increased in fury, and we were sending about 100 shells to the minute from land and sea into the enemy's positions. Cannot really describe the conflict, but it was like heavy continuous thunder, accompanied by loud reports. The hill which was occupied by the enemy was one smoking mass, and each time a shell burst, clouds of earth and smoke were shot up in the air. The enemy seemed to stick to their positions and kept up a heavy fire. They belted our aeroplanes with shrapnel, but did not do any damage. The day ended quite calm, with a beautiful sunset.

9TH Up at 6 am. The guns were silent this morning, with the exception of a few land batteries. The weather is ideal. When we turned out, the sun was fairly high, but its effort is tempered by cold breezes. I had practically no work to do all day. The firing continues on land. Many troops were landed from the ships. The captain let us have his piano in the afternoon, so we were able to have a few hymns and songs. Some Greeks came alongside in a small boat from one of the neighbouring islands. They sold oranges, cigarettes etc. About 7.30 pm, we saw what appeared to be shells bursting on our camp, which was situated on the peninsula. We also heard that we are getting up steam and moving to a naval base.

10TH We drew anchor about 2 am, and on turning out at 6 am found we were back at Lemnos. About 20 ships have come from the Dardanelles. It is very disappointing when we know that one of our sections has landed on Gallipoli. As a section we have a little pride, and after we received such compliments on passing out, we expected the first turn ashore. Our officer was senior on this boat, and we all felt that if he had pushed the matter, we should have been ashore now. We are in Lemnos Bay again. There is a row of buoys at the entrance on which is suspended a torpedo net. The island of Lemnos will perhaps have an area as large as that of Ireland. The land appears to be of volcanic origin, and mountains line the coast. The whole countryside is devoid of trees, but the hills and mountains are clothed with bright grass. There are a few clusters of homes, but as far as we can see there are no roads. One wonders what means of communication these people have with the outer world. I think they are Greeks. I was surprised to see them selling Carr's biscuits and Nestlé chocolates from boats. About 5 pm we moved further up the bay, and



From Laffer, Gottschalk
 72342 RE
 2/3 Section
 by
 Mediterranean Expdy. Org.
 7. 31 PM

Kind regards
 Hope you are better now

ΕΛΛΑΣ - GRÈCE
Carte Postale

HARROGATE
 LONDON
 RECEIVED FROM
 7 50 PM
 NO CHARGE TO
 MAY 11
 MAIL ACTIVE SERVICE

Angline Cocconidhis, Editeur, Athènes.
 Angline Cocconidhis, Editeur, Athènes.

Will be sorry to
 hear of the
 illness. I wish
 all the fine recovery.
 of the district but the
 cardmen only have these
 cards for Greece. Hope
 you are well.
 Love
 Eddie

Dot M.
 11 May 1915.

Mrs Higgins
~~Harrogate~~
~~Wagon Hire~~
 Harrogate N.B.
 Engd

58702

Athens. Eddie perhaps sending the only available card?

MAY 1915

stood about half a mile from shore. We could see several camps. The twilight here is very short, and sunsets are really fine. The sky in the west is a mass of red and gold, whilst overhead it is of a blue which is peculiar to Eastern skies.

11TH Up at 6 am. I am almost ashamed to call this trip serving King and Country. Being on special duty, I am relieved of all Army work, and my work only occupies about three hours daily on average. I get 1st class food, and can dress just as I please. It's nice to find oneself in a real comfortable place whilst in the Army. I have bought some postcards from a Greek boatman. The natives are eager to trade wherever we go. They never seem to have anything suitable for taking home though. Forty men went ashore today to gather grass for the horses. I was unlucky, being on special duty. Have asked if I can go tomorrow. A chap who went to one of the villages this morning said the people seem very dirty. Beer was 1/- a bottle and wine 1d a glass. We had a heavy shower of rain this morning. It is the first rain since we left England.

12TH Up at 6 am. It has been raining all night, and was overcast when we turned out. The rain is no doubt due to the mountains and hills. It rained until about 9.30 am. Last night I was present when a horse died. It was a painful sight. Today I formed one of the burial party. We had to tow him ashore and bury him on land. I took an oar out to land. We row the boat with eight single oars. About 100 yards from shore, the sea became quite shallow, so we had to undress and pull the boat in. We soon had the animal buried, and then had a swim. There was a village quite near, but we were not allowed to go owing to the fact that the islands belong to the Greeks, which is a neutral country. The countryside was sown with barley. It was gay with wild flowers, such as poppies, tares, daisies etc. Some of the natives came selling figs, chocolate etc., but they had quite a high price on their wares. I did not speculate, because I may require my money later, and really I have more than enough to eat on board. In fact I am going to tackle a five-course dinner just now.

13TH Up at 6 am. Working amongst stores all the morning. Went for a swim in the sea before lunch. It was very enjoyable, and quite warm. Nothing fresh happened today. The *Goliath* has been sunk in the Dardanelles. Three men swam to shore and back, distance about two to three miles.

14TH Been a sailor for a month now. Am quite enjoying the life. We may be on the ship for weeks yet. I am not worried about going ashore, because there is plenty of time yet, and we shall be called upon as soon as an advance is made. I have been above to borrow plenty of books of the 6d. novel type, but beggars can't choose. Have just been offered the privilege of using the saloon library, so have chosen *The Cloister and the Hearth*. I swam round the ship today. The swimming is the finest I have ever had. We had 10 penny packets of cigarettes issued to us today. A ship B19 on which our airline section N15

MAY 1915

were quartered, anchored about mile away. Five of us swam over to her about 6 pm. My word it seemed a long way away when we got in the water. It was rather nice to be right in the sea depending on oneself. Saw Langley and a few others.

15TH Up at 6 am. Some of the ships have gone to Alexandria, but a lot more have come in. There will be about 60 here. The *Queen Elizabeth* is here taking a rest. The sailors speak with awe about 'Lizzie'. We saw her firing and there is no doubt that she has some powerful guns. Had a swim in afternoon. Went round the boat, but had some difficulty in getting round, owing to the choppy sea. Slept in the open air at night on a roof of the boat deck. Woke up quite refreshed.

16TH Sunday. Up at 6 am. The life is ideal, but one is apt to eat too much on my job. We spend day sleeping and eating. It was a very hot day. About 3.30 pm we got orders: 'Sail at 4 pm for Alex, discharge troops and take in 30 days' stores, and return to Lemnos. Keep a look out for submarine attack.' I think we shall go back to Chatby. I slept on boat deck all night. We were overhauled by a ship at 11.30 pm.

17TH Up at 6 am. Very rough sea. Worked very hard all morning. We are now back again in the deep blue sea. I am not exactly looking forward to our return to camp at Alex. We shall be amongst the sand, heat and flies once again. I have made quite a lot of friends on board. Will Evans, the second steward has been a good boss. There are also Ted Jones – butcher, Chips and Sparks – Smith, Brown, Paddy, Bernard and Cavanagh, and quite a lot more. I shall be sorry to leave. Slept on boat deck all night.

18TH Up at 6 am. Very fine morning, and sea fairly smooth compared with yesterday. Uneventful day. Have finished reading *The Cloister and the Hearth*, which I have enjoyed very much. At 6 pm we sighted land, and at 7.30 pm we were nearing the harbour of Alexandria. At 8 pm we anchored outside the harbour. There was nothing much to see, so I turned in.

19TH Up before 6 am, at the time the pilot came on board and took us into the harbour. He was an Egyptian, and wore a fez cap and a morning coat. There were dozens of transporters in the harbour. Most of them had stores aboard for the Dardanelles. We did not berth, but anchored in the middle of the harbour. I bought an *Egyptian Gazette* for 1 piastre (= 2 d). It is exceedingly hot here, and it is hard to find a shady place owing to the sun being nearly overhead. There are quite a lot of Turkish sailing ships in port, which have been captured by our warships. There is a large French warship in the port, named *Jeanne d'Arc*. It has seven funnels. Spent all day anchored in Alexandria harbour. The harbour seems to be packed with transporters, and

MAY 1915

there does not appear to be room for them in the docks. We have handed in all mess utensils and hammocks, but that does not exactly prove that we are going ashore. The orders have not come yet. Went to kip at 8 pm.

20TH Up at 6 am. Spent all morning sewing and mending. Our clothes are beginning to wear out before we start fighting. It was extremely hot all day, and we could do nothing but lie down in the shade. At 2.30 pm, we were taken into the docks and berthed at a coal wharf. As we passed the French battleship *Jeanne d'Arc*, their band played us 'Tipperary'. I have never heard them play anything but Tipperary. No doubt they do it in compliment to the English. Our wharf is Quai à Charbon 50-51. I have been watching the natives unload coal. They carry about 1 cwt. at a time in straw baskets. The foreman keeps urging them on, and they have to work like slaves. Goods are carried away from the docks in flat carts about 12 ft long and 3 ft broad, drawn by a pair of horses or mules. The driver stands up, similar to the drivers in circus processions. The animals are worked very hard. The different types of men are very interesting. I wish I could sketch some of the faces. I shall try to get to know some Arabic if we land, but I have not yet dropped across a native who would give me the alphabet. I can get the figures from numbers on street doors. Orders came that 15 out of each section can go ashore. We drew for it, and I was unlucky. However I did not see the sense of staying on board, so I had a trip out. The road out went through native quarters. It does not seem safe to go alone down here. The natives have sentries every so far, and there are lots of native police about. I had a walk through the city. The streets were very busy, and full of soldiers. Returned at 9 pm for roll call.

21ST Up at 5.30 am. We are going to camp today. Horses, wagon and stores unloaded in the morning. I was on guard on the gangway. We were unloading and waiting all day, and did not leave the docks until 5 pm. The heat was terrible. We each took a horse up to camp, which was situated at Kleopatra, six miles from the docks. We got the horses fixed up, and had some refreshments about 9 pm. The place is beyond our old camp at Chatby. It will perhaps be four miles from the town, and is also about mile from the beach. We are 10 in a tent, and seem quite comfortable. We slept fairly well.

22ND Up at 6 am. First parade 7 am. We were able to look round our camp. It is a kind of sandy waste, and there are a few large mansions near. The mansions are mostly apartment houses, and are built of a kind of stone plaster. Many of them will have as many as 100 rooms. The sand is full of ants, and small lizards keep running about. Lizards about nine inches long run about the walls of the houses. I was assisting the wheelwright in the morning. It is awful working in the sun. No one can understand what the sun is like. It is practically overhead at noon. I ran off for a swim, and it was delightful. We found a sandy grotto of beautiful water which was warm. Some of the water

MAY 1915

we found in a pool was quite hot. Finished work at 6 pm. Had a walk round and a feed. The town is decorated for the arrival of the Sultan of Egypt.

23RD Sunday. Up at 6 am. Assisted the joiner in the morning. Went for a swim. It was fine. A lot of Australians and New Zealanders are camped here. They are decent fellows. One lot has a monkey for a mascot, and some of them have Maori or Aborigine boys. We are having a fine time. I drew 200 piastres today. (= £2 1s) Had a walk round with Watson last night. Spent afternoon writing. On 24-hour guard commencing 6 pm. I took the last turn. Two of us went across to the Australian canteen for something to eat and drink, and we fell in with two Australians, and stayed with them about two hours. They are a fine body of men, and seem to be free, open-air men. They told us quite a lot about conditions in Australia, also about the peculiar animals and trees.

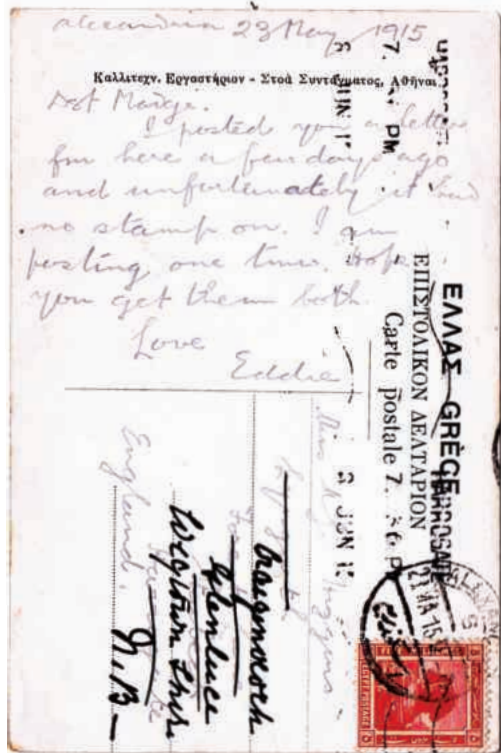
24TH Up at 4 am on guard. Saw the sun rise. It was a very beautiful exhibition. Found it very overpowering in the sun all day. Spent a lot of time talking to the Arabs. I met a postman who claimed he could speak 14 languages, and he offered to converse with me in any language we knew. In the evening, I had a feed at a cafe, and spent the rest of the time looking around the shops. The town is at a disadvantage having so many languages. Arabic, French and English are the chief, and there are many others spoken, such as Greek, Italian, Maltese etc.

25TH Up at 6 am. Spent day lettering some motor cycles. There are six of them, and we found them on *SS Esmeraldas* without an owner. I am getting on fine with Arabic, and can almost manage to purchase things by speaking the language. I have a very good book. Had tea at Soldiers and Sailors Home. Afterwards went to American Cosmograph. My friend and I sat next to two Frenchmen born in Egypt, and they explained many things to us. They each spoke four languages.

26TH Up at 6 am, painting again. We have a swim every day. It is fine. I can go out about half a mile from the shore and sit on some rocks. The water is so clear that we can see the sea bed, although the sea is 20 or 30 ft deep in places. Spent the evening in camp, because I had a late night last night. I sat down with a friend named Mohammed 'Rhad' (rain), and tried to improve my Arabic. It is 'Ra'ad' (thunder). A difficult language to a certain extent, because it has nothing in common with English, and one has to remember the name of things. Went to bed about 9 pm.

27TH Up at 6 am. Went for a ride with a pair of horses. Went for a swim in the afternoon. In the evening went down to town. Had an interesting conversation with a gentleman Arab. He examined my knowledge of Arabic and said

MAY 1915



I did very well, and would be able to speak Arabic in about a month. I also had a talk with two Frenchmen, and tried a bit of French on them. There was an Allies demonstration or procession in the town. We followed it for about two miles. The Italian boy scouts provided the band. Hundreds of people followed, and there was cheering in a dozen languages. It was very impressive. I had a conversation with an Armenian, and he told me our camp is situated on the site of Cleopatra's tomb, but as yet the tomb cannot be found. He said if we dug down 30 metres, we should find Mohammedan graves, and further still Roman graves. I have seen a lot of locusts today. They are a fine insect, quite yellow and about two inches long. They are considered a pest, and thousands of them are destroyed every year, so many this year that the crops will not suffer damage from them.

28TH Up at 6 am. Was on lone guard all day. I found it hard work looking after the horses in the hot sun. Had a swim in the evening. Bought a *sikin* (knife) from Mohammed Ra'ad for 15 piastres. It is a kind of Arab dagger. Went to the Australian canteen for something to eat. Turned in about 9 pm.

29TH Up at 6 am. On the Quartermaster's fatigue party. We had to go in the transport motor, and draw rations for men and horses. We saw some underground passages amongst the ruins, but the military authorities have put

MAY/JUNE 1915

them out of bounds. Had a swim in the evening, and afterwards had a look round camp for some carved stones, but I was not successful. It appears they require digging for. On guard at 6 pm.

30TH Sunday. On guard all day. Had intended going to church in evening, but finished work too late. Had a walk out to find Luna Park. It was a fine place, but appears to be a kind of promenade. We went through the native quarters. There were hundreds of Arabs in the streets.

31ST Was up at 6 am. Was assisting the cooks. Had the job of sawing and chopping wood all the morning in the sun. It was heavy work. Writing letters in the evening.

JUNE

1ST Up at 6 am. Took charge of a pair of horses all day. Went for a two-hour ride in morning. Went to Australian canteen in the evening for some lemonade. Finished my money. I shall have to say to the Arabs *Ma fish feluce*.

2ND Up at 6 am. On forage fatigue all morning. It is very heavy work carrying corn in the heat of the day. We received no pay today. Stayed in at night to write home. Had a nice walk along the beach.

3RD Up at 6 am. On forage fatigues in the morning. Received pay in the afternoon – 78 piastres (16s). Went to canteen for a decent feed in the evening. Was on guard at 6 pm for 24 hours.

4TH On guard all day. Had fine swim in morning. In evening had a look round the town. We had a very nice seven-course dinner at a French restaurant.

5TH Up at 6 am. Received two letters. Had swim in the morning, and received five more letters. I seem to have got all in now except two parcels which are on the way. Our camp is being fitted up with cookhouse, store room etc. In the evening went to a cafe and the American Cosmograph. Four of our chaps were caught out by the main guard last night and put in prison. They were marched down under escort today.

6TH We are having some fine salads in our tent. We do not fancy the Army stew issued at 5 pm, so we make salads which cost a piastre each. Had a walk in town in evening. Called in the cafe for some refreshments. Strolled through one of the native quarters, which appears to be a shopping centre. It is fine to mix with a crowd of natives. Most of the poorer classes keep to the old style of dress. They have a kind of waistcoat with a fancy front, a pair of loose trousers with a slot round the waist, and the whole is covered by a long flowing robe.

JUNE 1915

I spent some time talking to some of the stallholders, but did not buy anything. Had a walk round the Soldiers and Sailors Institute. They assist soldiers in every way. We can buy food, read books, write letters and every facility is given to soldiers to assist them with letters and parcels.

7TH Up at 6 am. Went out as brakeman on the wagon. We passed through a native quarter and along the canal bank. The canal is connected with an arm of the Nile. It was quaint to see the barges going up the canal. Some were pulled by men and some were punted by means of poles, and some employed sails. The bargee was nothing like his English counterpart in dress and appearance, but he carries his wife on board, and she does her share of the steering etc. She was however dressed in a similar manner to the English nun, the lower part of her face being veiled, and a kind of gold cotton reel fixed on her nose. Mohammed Ibarri, who sells fruit at our camp and is a partner of Mohammed Ra'ad, brought what I understood to be his intended wife. Her name was Narmie, and Mohammed was going to marry her when he had saved £20 or £30, which price is paid to the girl's father. I did not see much beauty in his choice, but there is no accounting for taste. At noon received orders that several of the operators and linesmen had to be ready at a minute's notice to proceed to Dardanelles. It is probably to work on telegraphy in the trenches. We may move off by Wednesday. Read five letters today. Spent evening corresponding.

8TH Up at 6 am. Did not receive any further news about going away. On guard at 6 pm for 24 hours. Wrote a few letters and slept out in the open for four hours. It was very pleasant, owing to the heavy dew.

Eddie on
cooking duty.



JUNE 1915

9TH On guard all day. Had a nice swim in the morning. The sea is very rough, but we quite enjoyed it. There is no more news about going away, but things are being got ready. Had a walk to the post office at night to post a few letters.

10TH Up at 6 am. Did a lot of grooming, and harness cleaning in the hot sun today. Had a swim in the morning, also one in the afternoon. I complained about the food today, but there is nothing doing. We get half a loaf each to last the day (1 lb), tea and bacon for breakfast; tea, jam, butter and cheese for dinner; stew for tea. We should like some tea instead of stew, but I am told the rations will not allow tea three times a day. I never eat meat here. My money has dwindled to 1 piastre, and of course I cannot buy my grub in the circumstances. I suppose it is all in the game. Stayed in at night and had a good read. I am getting plenty of newspapers from England just now.

11TH Up at 6 am. Had two good swims today. Got about a mile out today, and was out amongst waves like mountains. Am in fine form if we get upset at sea. Finished reading Barrie's *When a Man's Single*. I must look out for some more of his books when I return. Stayed in reading and writing at night. We have got orders to leave here tomorrow.

12TH Up at 6 am. We finished work at 2 pm. Went up Sike el Gedida Street, which is a native quarter to see the catacombs at Kon el Nadura. It was a ship signalling station and observatory at the top of the hill. The man in charge did not appear to know what catacombs were, but at least he showed us through some underground passages, but as we had no candles, we could not proceed far. We then had tea and proceeded to the museum. It was very interesting. After that we went to Jardin Nouzha. It was one of the most beautiful parks I have ever seen. There were masses of flowers, far more brilliant than one sees in England, and there were hundreds of varieties of palm trees. I picked a small orange from one of the trees. The park boasts of zoological specimens. There were monkeys, birds, porcupines, gazelles, pelicans etc. It was a very interesting half day. Paid 16/- today.

13TH Up at 6 am. Paraded at 10 am in full kit for departure to the ship *Annaberg*. The *Annaberg* (A27) is a German trading boat captured a few months ago. It was fitted up as a horse boat, and came to Alex, and now it is carrying a large number of troops and only a few horses. It does not appear to have been altered much to carry troops instead of horses. We arrived on board, and were allotted 9 horse boxes to accommodate all our stores and 14 men. These stalls are 2 ft 8 inches wide. We fixed a platform up about 3 ft above deck, and doubled the accommodation. I have had a look around the ship, and find men kipping in all kinds of ill-ventilated places below deck. We are in the open air. Norman and I scouted around the ship and secured a

JUNE 1915

quantity of rush matting to put underneath us. This is quite a cosmopolitan shipment of troops. I have seen English, Australians and French aboard. We have had a hot time this morning, and perspiration has poured off us all the morning, but now we are settled in our kips and waiting for the boat to sail. I have had some eggs, bread and tea, which I bought, and feel as happy as a king. I have just paid 6d for a bottle of lemonade. I acted as cook, and made some tea. Some of the troops commenced to disembark, and it eventually turned out that the ship has been commandeered by the embarkation officer. There was not sufficient life boat accommodation and the coal bunkers were on fire. We took all our luggage off and went back to camp. Finished the day by having a swim, followed by a good supper at the canteen.

14TH Up at 6.30 am. Had a swim in the morning. Paraded at 2 pm with full kit. We embarked on another boat, B11, (I think it is German) which was formerly in the Canadian trade. It seems to have been called *Vaterland*, and renamed *Southland*. We were fortunate enough to secure bunks. Four of us have a cabin to ourselves. It is the finest kip I have had on a boat. I got two hours' guard, 5.30 pm to 7.30 pm. Enjoyed sleep in a bed.

15TH Up at 7 am. Had a fairly decent breakfast. Some of us are to go on signalling duties on the bridge. Several ships which set off yesterday have returned owing to submarines. I had a swim round the ship. The water was a bit soupy. One of the sailors on board had a chameleon as a pet. It soon commenced to change colour when placed on a different background. We set sail at 5.30 pm, and at the same time five other transports sailed. I believe there are many submarines about. Most of the troops on board here are men who have been wounded and are returning to their units.

16TH On signalling duty on the top bridge 2.30 to 6.30 am. Had no work to do. I did the same hours signalling duty in the afternoon (2.30 pm to 6.30 pm). We sighted land on both sides about 5.30 pm. Strict guard has been put on, and men are at all parts of the ship ready to shoot submarines with rifles. If the alarm sounds, we have to go up with loaded rifles, and have a pot at the enemy. A large number of the men on board have been wounded and are going to join their regiments. Some battalions have only 200 men left out of a thousand. The Laners Fusiliers have suffered badly. The Australians held a concert in the evening. It was very fine.

17TH On duty at 2.30 am. There was a big gale blowing and very heavy seas. It was very rough on the top bridge. We kept sighting rocks and land in morning. A cruiser came in sight about 8 am. We were going against the wind all day, and our course was well to the west towards Greece. In the evening we had a concert in the 2nd class saloon. One of the Australians accompanied the singers on a concertina. There were some good turns. One of the chaps was

JUNE 1915

very good on the mouth organ. He could imitate bagpipes, also the violin. We had printed programmes.

18TH On duty at 2.30 am. Had to be on the alert at 3.45 am, as we neared Lemnos about that time. It was just dawn, and a destroyer steamed out and told us the gate was not yet open. We got in Mudros Bay about 5.30 am. The bay appears to be full of Men of War. I can count 12, and we are only at the entrance. Submarine No. 27 steamed past us at close range. I was glad to see one. We had some signalling to do in afternoon and evening. I feel very hungry on troop-ship grub, and have asked for a feed at 2.30 am, and think I shall get it. Found another concert in full swing at 9 pm. The Australians are fine fellows and they can give a good entertainment. I felt sorry that I could do nothing, but that is one of the drawbacks of being a washout. Went to bed about 10.30 pm.

19TH Up at 2.30 am for signalling. There was nothing doing, but a sharp look out is necessary. I managed to get some cocoa and bread and butter from the man in the pantry. It was very nice, and will help to keep me from being hungry during the day. This boat is very tight as regards food. I found a pound loaf this morning when going on duty, but such occasions as these are very rare.

Lemnos looks fine in the early morning light. We have a few hundred men and horses camped round the bay. By all appearances, the harvest has been gathered, and the hills no longer present the fresh green appearance. At 5 pm we transferred to the *Prince Abbess* of London. It is a small steamer, and we are to stay on deck with our kits until we arrive somewhere up the Dardanelles. Arrived up the Gulf of Saros about 11 pm. We transferred to a steam trawler and were taken up to Cape Helles. We were enabled to land by means of *SS River Clyde*, which has been beached, and a wooden bridge connecting with the land. We walked with full kit about two miles. We had camps on both sides of us all the way. Everything was very weird, and I felt a little excited. We slept at the Quartermaster's Stores until 6 am.

20TH It was part tent and part dugout. A shell had been right through the tent during the day. This camp is called 'W Beach'. We were greeted with terrible news, all the men had a terrible day, and most had got the 'wind up'. One hundred and seven shells had been dropped on the camp during the day, and although nobody had been killed, many horses had been killed. As I was moving about camp, I heard a crack and a shriek or whistle, and a shell had come into our camp. A friend shouted to me to come into his dugout, and I did so, but not before I had been showered with earth from some part of the shell. Several more fell in camp during the day, and on each occasion we have to run underground like rabbits. One man has had his leg broken by a shell. I was allotted to a tent, but tents are almost useless. It is a case of dig or die,

JUNE 1915

and five of us have worked hard all day. I am fairly well satisfied with it, and it will be a case of bad luck if we are hit. We have a few prisoners in a tent; they are surrounded by barbed wire. The wounded from the trenches marched past us at breakfast time. It was a sad sight. We finished our tent about 8 pm, and after making some tea turned in. We have to carry water about a mile.

21ST On parade at 6 am. Our tent-cum-dugout has been very nice. The French Artillery are firing away like mad. I am getting to know the voices of various guns. Those who have been here a while know exactly when to run. A warship is up this morning and is shelling the Asiatic coast. We see many aeroplanes and submarines. I feel quite contented now that we only have an occasional shell near us. We paraded for rifle inspection at 8.30 am, and I was dismissed. Many of the chaps have secured fine trophies such as Turkish shells, bayonets &c. All loose kit found on the field is taken to Ordnance Stores. I shall have to look round. On some very heavy fatigue work in morning. Instructed to report at 2 pm with full kit for work at HCO (13th Corps Office). It was about half a mile away over the aerodrome. Edgar and I were then sent out towards the firing line, to open an office for the 52nd Division. The whole of the Division is composed of Scotch Territorials. The Lowland Signal Company RE had arrived, but we opened the office and worked it in conjunction with two of their operators. We had to commence working on a huge plain, but towards dusk moved into a trench. We worked two on and six off. We had a splendid view of the firing, but no shells came our way. We were in a fairly deep trench, but no roof. It is a rough life, but I am quite happy and contented. I manage to pick up plenty of grub.

22ND Managed some breakfast, also a wash and a shave. I like being amongst the Scotties. We were on duty nearly all day. Went down to W Beach for a

Camp at
Cape Helles.



JUNE 1915

bathe at 4 pm. We received orders at 5 pm to return to HCO. Had a rough tramp for two miles with about a cwt of kit. We begged a night's lodgings and had to go out to Naval Division next morning for operating work. I have seen some fine hookah or hubble bubble pipes made out of a pickle bottle by the Hindus.

23RD Up at 6 am. Off to Royal Naval Signal Office at 9 am. There are three of us, and we are relieving three other operators, and take over their dugout. I was not quite satisfied with the abode, so Edgar and I made it as impregnable as poss., and made it 18 inches deeper. I worked 9.30 am till 2 pm in the Signal Office. We are really amongst the fighting now. Our office is not two miles from the firing line, and in the evening rifle bullets reach the camp. We have had about three shells and half a dozen shrapnel shells near the camp today. Some of the shrapnel burst beyond us. Three men were killed in the next field. One of our section men was killed while standing at the door of our dugout a few days ago. We have to run and bob down when shells come, and some of them give very little notice before bursting. However I am quite happy, and haven't got the wind up yet, and don't intend to lose my nerve if I can help it. The food is excellent here. Went to bed about 10.15 pm and slept well.

24TH Up at 5.45 am. On duty 6 am to 2 pm. The chaps in RN division are very decent. They are mostly from TS. [*Tyneside*]. Cpl. Jayne, the big Association man is here, and has given us his assistance and advice with regard to feeding, cooking &c. I prepared tea towards nightfall, did some washing. When we commenced tea, the enemy commenced giving us some shrapnel. We continued our tea, but had to keep low down in the dugout. I think we had a dozen shells in the camp, and five of them threw earth into our house. The affair lasted a little over an hour and on emerging we found bullet holes all round our place within two to ten yards. Unless one has been fired at, one can hardly realise the force of shrapnel. It hisses and whistles, then bursts with a ping. I did not get the wind up me over the job. The feeling is that I might be unlucky, and as they come, I wonder if they will wing me. Somehow, during the affair, one realises how frail a thing the human body is. Our dugout is not as safe as we could wish, but we are not supplied with any materials. In time we may be able to swipe a large plank, and roof part of it over with sandbags. At present we trust to a sandbag wall.

25TH On duty 6 am to 2 pm. Had fairly quiet day from shells. A few fell in morning and afternoon. In the evening some stray shrapnel and bullets came within yards of me, but they seemed spent. I had a walk through French lines to a point where I could see across the Dardanelles to the Asiatic coast. The RN division made a little advance during last night, but the hill (Achi Baba), which is the key to the situation is still in the hands of the Turks.

JUNE 1915

26TH Up at about 5.40 am, went out, and on looking up found a Taube, overhead. [A Taube was a German reconnaissance aircraft. Its wings resembled those of a dove, which is 'Taube' in German]. I was in middle of a field, and as I ran away, he seemed to follow. He dropped a bomb. It was one mile away. I worked 6 am to 2 pm. A Frenchman came up with a proclamation which the Taube had dropped. It was in French and Turkish. It pointed out our position in France, our losses here, and unless we surrendered, threatened to cut off our communications, and we should die of hunger and thirst. It said we shall welcome you with open arms, and you will be able to sleep and eat at your ease. I saw two French soldiers from Legion of Foreigners Regiment. One was a Yankee and one a Russian. They seem to have men of all nations fighting for them. In evening, walked two miles to Fort of Sedd el Bahr and saw two guns which *Elizabeth* and *Triumph* had put out of action before we landed. They were 27 feet long by 9 inch bore. We came home and fried some potatoes. We quite enjoyed the supper.

27TH Worked 6 am to 2 pm. Had a sleep in afternoon. We had a fine tea of chips and steak. In the evening walked to W Beach, and saw some of the boys. I felt quite at home trotting about Gallipoli. We got respirators today and it is thought they may be required. Read 10 letters and two papers tonight. Preparations are being made for taking the hill (Achi Baba). The attack may come off any time now, and it is to be one of the biggest victories of the war. Worked 10 pm to 6 am.

28TH Finished work at 6 am. Cooked breakfast and went to sleep about 8.30 am. At 11 am I woke up, and the whole ground seemed to be shaking and throbbing as if some huge engine was working nearby. Edgar told me that the attack on Achi Baba had commenced. The shelling lasted about three hours, and the hill seemed like an inferno all the time. We poured in thousands of shells from all points, and the whole place was one mass of smoke. The crackling of machine guns and rifles added to the roar. I heard that we captured 300 prisoners, took many trenches, and advanced a mile at one point. We also took a lot of guns. Many shells were dropped during the day, but at 6.45 pm, after four of our aeroplanes had been up, the shelling commenced again. The hill was once again one smoking mass, and as far as I could see, our 42nd Division advanced, but there is no report yet. The Turks replied to our fire with big doses of shrapnel, and Asiatic Annie was tossing coal boxes to a point about a mile from us. I felt very highly strung while the job was on, and so did everybody else who witnessed the affair, and up to me going on duty, the machine gun and rifle fire had not ceased. It must be hell in the trenches. We have had an open-air concert in our cyclists' camp, and while we were enjoying ourselves, the English batteries kept putting shells over us. There was some good talent. One boy sang a song in Welsh, and then gave it in English. They are using quite a lot of star shells tonight, which light up the

JUNE/JULY 1915

countryside. It appears we have taken 800 prisoners, six guns and advanced 1,300 yards.

29TH Finished work at 6 am, and cooked breakfast. Had a sleep in morning. Plenty of shells over from Asia in afternoon and evening. A few came near to us after tea, and we had to get under. They are using a lot of star shells up at the firing line. I procured two shells, Turkish shrapnel, and intend taking them home if I can carry them.

30TH Finished at 6 am and cooked breakfast. Plenty of shells flying about over us all day, but nothing into our camp. The Asiatic guns have sent a lot over. In evening walked to 8th Corps office to see some of the boys. On our return it clouded over very much, and the road amongst the various camps presented a weird appearance. Vivid flashes of lightening were showing up the surrounding country. As we arrived home, the lightening increased, and some of the French batteries opened out. Many star shells were going up. I could not help but stay out and watch the flashes. It is one of the most fascinating sights I have ever seen.

JULY

1ST About 3 am was having a nap on duty, and a shell came very near us in the signal office. I woke up and saw the chaps crouching down, but somehow I was soon asleep again. In afternoon, I made a hookah or hubble-bubble pipe out of a pickle bottle. It smokes very well. I received two parcels in the evening, and I think all things will be welcomed, especially the chocs and pound of tobacco. Today has been the quietest day I have seen on the peninsula. In the evening two of us borrowed horse each, and rode over to Sedd el Bahr village. It is occupied by the French, and all in ruins. On our way back, we called on two French officers, who were friends of my companion. One was (lieutenant) veterinary surgeon, and the other a captain doctor in the Red Cross. We had a pleasant half hour, and accepted coffee and wine while we conversed in English and French. Enjoyed the outing very much. In the afternoon, I had a very nice swim in Morto Bay. It is frequently shelled from Asia, but was fairly quiet while I was there.

2ND Finished work at 6 am. Very quiet day as regards shelling. The signal office is being moved to a new position, and in consequence we have to make a new dugout. It is hard lines. I received one letter and two papers today. It commenced to rain at 10.30 pm. Quite an unusual occurrence here. We had a very heavy shower lasting an hour.

3RD Finished work at 6 am. After breakfast Edgar and I secured a site and commenced digging in earnest. I swiped a fine beam, and with the two which

JULY 1915

we already had, we made a fine dugout. When asleep our heads are roofed over by beams and sandbags. The other part is covered with a small tent, and as a protection against shellfire, we have thick walls of sandbags on the two dangerous sides. It is neat, safe and roomy, and as nice a dugout as I have seen. We were digging until about 2 pm, and it took till 7.30 pm to complete the job. One cannot imagine what labour is entailed in building a nice home. I went to bed about 7.45 pm, and Edgar let me lay till 12 midnight. I went to sleep listening to the strains of the bagpipes. Colbert was over in the evening from HCO. Although it is one and a half miles to the rear from here, they get some nasty shells. Today they have had two men blown to bits. I knew one of them slightly. One of Colbert's section's men was wounded in the leg. Finished work at 6 am. We had toast and chicken for breakfast. We are getting tired of bacon. Intended having a walk to firing line in the morning, but they shelled our camps, so we thought it wise to stay at home. Sat down to write a letter in afternoon, when I came across one of our dispatch riders, a Yankee, who was just having a walk up to the firing line. I should say we went within half a mile of it. We went along a passage, or sap, for a long way, then came out into the open. I saw a lot of guns, also a catapult bomb thrower. I picked up a few trophies, some shell fuses, a bayonet, a Turkish bullet and some Turkish barbed wire. The *Carthage* was sunk by submarine off W Beach today. It sank in five minutes. All troops had landed, only six lives were lost.

5TH Up about 8 am. My duty today is 2 till 10 pm. When I awoke found a lot of firing going on. It appears that the Turks made an attack. Things appear very hot in the firing line. They had to retire eventually, and left about 300 dead, including a German officer. A Taube was over our camp twice in the morning. It dropped five bombs on the English and French lines. We were shelled with explosives and shrapnel all the morning. Things were fairly quiet in afternoon. We had heard that the RN Division are being relieved at an early date. The Lowland (52nd) Division are filling their places. This is a Scotch Division, where Edgar and I opened an office. I suppose we shall stay here.

Dugout at Helles.



JULY 1915

6TH Up at 8 am. Went for walk towards the firing line. Picked up a few shells and fuses. Had a good view of the Turkish positions, as I was on the top of a hill. There was not much firing all day. We had a few nasty shrapnels at tea time. The 52nd Division do not appear to be taking over this office now. Made a bracelet of the copper band off a Turkish shell. These bands are sweat-ed onto the shell so as to fit the groovings of the guns. Have just seen a copy of *Fag Ends* a mag which the RN Division men are bringing out. The front cover is excellently executed. The gate of Sedd el Bahr Fort is shown with a sentry on duty. At the top a British and French soldier are sharing a meal. Quiet day, very little shelling. Am afraid we shall soon leave here, as we hear the signal office will be dismantled shortly.

8TH I was pleased to receive four letters and four papers. A few shells were sent right over our camp.

9TH Fairly quiet day. The shells seem to be confined to a point beyond us. They came fairly heavy at tea time, and a little to the rear of us four men were killed, and several wounded. (Hood Battalion). About 10 pm things grew lively in the trenches, there was a lot of rifle and machine gun fire accompanied by star shells. Spent most of the day reading the papers which arrived yesterday. I quite enjoy being here with the RN division, and shall be sorry to get marching orders. Water is very plentiful, and we can keep clean, which is a luxury on active service.

10TH Fairly quiet day. Shelling fairly heavy at 7 pm. In morning I had a walk to Y Beach. I went through the 52nd Division lines (They are all Scotsmen in the division) The country is covered with a kind of heather and scrub.

11TH Worked 2 till 10 pm. Artillery fire continued all day. We had some nasty shrapnel about, and about 8 am one of my friends had a narrow escape.

12TH On 6 am to 2 pm. John was unwell this morning, and felt very faint. The doctor sent him to 1st. Field Ambulance dressing station His temperature was over 100. A heavy bombardment commenced at 4.30 am this morning, and died down somewhere towards 8.30 am.

When the attack commenced, I think the French and our 52nd Division were attacked. I believe it is the first time the 52nd Lowlands Division have been in action. We hear unofficially that a good advance has been made, and we have seen 60 prisoners come down. Altogether we saw 200 prisoners and two Turkish officers brought past our camp. Firing of the big guns continued until dark, and rifle fire was going on at 10 pm., when I retired. About 100 prisoners were quartered in a compound a few yards from our camp. As far as I can make out, the progress today is far beyond expectations. We have taken seven

JULY 1915

lines of trenches and 20 guns. The French have also taken a few trenches. I hear we have taken 500 prisoners in all. Some of the prisoners looked fairly fit, but the last batch had hardly any boots, and were very ragged. They came down bleeding and weary. Some could hardly limp. Although it is gratifying, nobody could gloat over the sight. We gave some of them a drink. I was glad to think the prisoners are now in good hands. I should say that the bombardment has been one of the biggest there has been on the peninsula. I read one letter from Madge tonight, 18th May, better late than never, and I also read one of our sergeant's at Alex. I had a parcel from home containing many useful things. I can hardly express what a pleasure a few sweets and a bit of soap gives us. I cannot close without saying how well the Scotchmen have fought today. There will be a big death roll. It is a sad affair. Sometimes I think I am not doing my full share when I am in the REs and only risking half as much as some of the infantrymen. However perhaps I am doing the most useful work possible.

13TH Up at 6 am, and the men in the trenches were going at it like mad. All the morning there was a awful bombardment from both sea and land, after which the attack commenced. The 52nd RN and the French appear to be in it. We heard it has been a very successful day. Some prisoners came down, and there was still firing in the trenches at 10.30 pm. It is said that our DHQ staff obtained much information from the two Turkish officers last night. A Turkish officer of the 20th Regiment gave us the information today that his regiment had been supplied with two cases of gas bombs and a pump with which to pump liquid fluid to be ignited by a sun glass. I was startled about 7 pm – a shell went right over my head, and dropped thirty yards in front of me without exploding. Went to see John this morning, and found he is not so bad. Also walked to HCO to see the other boys. The ground was cut up by numerous shell holes, but things were quiet when we took our trip.

14TH Fairly quiet day as regards shelling in camp. They were busy in trenches through and after yesterday's advance. The various brigades took a lot of sorting out. I walked to the first field ambulance in afternoon to see John, and found he had gone to hospital. They could not tell me where. We had some fine coffee for dinner, which I obtained from the Frenchmen. Had a very busy time in the office this morning, and was very discomforted with sand and flies. The winds are bringing down a lot of sand from the hills.

15TH On duty 6 am to 2 pm. Had a busy time. There has been much fighting today. It appears the Scotchmen's 52nd Division are too congested, and although they have done excellent work, the various battalions need reorganising, and the poor fellows need a rest. The RN Division are taking their place in the trenches. It is hard lines on the RND men, because they have been on the job a long time. When the troops were moving about at 7 pm, one of our

JULY 1915

men, Daws of TS, was killed at our observation post yesterday. Several of our men have been hit, things are a bit unhealthy up there. I posted a shell home tonight. Received a letter from Madge tonight (24th June).

16TH Not much fighting today. In afternoon went for a swim to Morto Bay. In evening Carr of Brigade Signals paid us a visit, and he was telling us his experiences of last few days in trenches. It appears there are hundreds of dead and wounded in the trenches, and he was laying cables along the captured trenches and saps in the dark. Men are having to wear respirators owing to the decomposing bodies. He was wandering for hours at night time laying cables, and finding the position of various brigades. Several of their men are wounded, and one killed. He had to climb over dead in places, and he said many of the Turks seemed to have been dead for days. I felt sick when I listened to his yarns. It is a job I should not ask for, although I should do my best if put on it. Attempts are now being made to clear the trenches, but until this is done, the attack cannot continue.

17TH On 6 am to 2 pm. I have long wanted to have a look at the proper trenches, so Edward and I set out about 3.30 pm, and went by way of Oxford Street Pass, past Backhouse Post, Romano's Well, Port Arthur to the support trenches. It was a lively walk, practically three and a half miles from our camp. Three miles of the distance was traversed in a communication trench. We had a fairly decent view of the Turks' position from Port Arthur. We went beyond there, and when about 200 yards from the firing line we were in quite a deep trench, and could see nothing more, so we reversed. Bullets were flying about, and shells passing over our heads that would put the fear of God in anyone. A shell dropped 15 yards from us on return journey and fortunately did not explode. I found a nice shell nose, and also got a French 75 shell case which I shall try to take home. The journey was no doubt a bit risky, but I have satisfied my wish to see what the trenches are like. A lot of fighting commenced at 9 pm. It is rather unusual, perhaps it is a Turkish counter attack.

18TH On duty 6 am to 2 pm, and 10 pm to 6 am on Monday. It was an uneventful day, and the only sign of fighting was a few outbursts from the French artillery. In the afternoon, I had a sleep. In the evening, had a walk to the French lines to exchange jam for coffee and rice. Coffee was off, but we got some rice. Had some steak and oxo for supper, but such a feed is not usual.

19TH Had a sleep in morning, after finishing work at 6 am. There was a lot of shelling both ways all day. When I was cooking tea, a shrapnel burst over the camp, killing two horses, and wounding two. The bullets rained about me, but I did not stop any. Read three letters and two papers today. I am a little disappointed with some of the men who are soldiers. The job has not

JULY 1915

been on very long, but they are nearly all wishing to go home. Of course there are quite a lot of fellows who are quite willing to see the job through, but the majority seem to cry for their home and mothers, as soon as they feel unwell. They meet you with a long face, and start wailing about their ailments. It certainly is not this type of man who is going to win the War. We all feel unwell at times, owing to the climate, but it is no use putting out the white flag. Then there is the type of man who is always ill if wanted to go on a job where there is a risk. I suppose they will return home heroes all. I cannot help but admire the few who are ever ready and attack the job in the right spirit. These remarks express what I feel as an observer of men. I have not been sent into real danger yet, although I am working as far forward as any of my section. However I am not crying for home until the job is finished.

20TH Finished work at 6 am. Had a sleep after cooking breakfast. There has been very little fighting, but the French artillery have sent a lot over. A canteen has opened on the beach, and our QMS received a lot of goods this morning. Edgar got some milk, some biscuits and some Greek delight while I was asleep. I got a dozen fresh eggs for 1/6d. I cooked steak and two fried eggs each for tea. It was an enjoyable meal seeing that we have been living on toast for a week. There was big fire on the French beach (V Beach) about 11 pm. I think it was caused by one of the asiatic shells. They seem to put a lot of shells over every night.

Trenches.



JULY 1915

21ST Finished work at 6 am. Quiet day. About tea time we got a few shells. It is rumoured that the Turks have 100,000 reinforcements coming up and as a heavy bombardment is expected we have been advised to make our dugouts secure. Edgar and I have decided ours will do, as we made it as secure as possible in the first instance. I assisted Clements of Birmingham with his dugout in evening.

22ND Finished at 6 am. Felt very poorly all day, with pains in the stomach. Managed to do the cooking. Towards evening we received another respirator each, and we are to be on the watch for very heavy Turkish bombardment. It is going to be a big effort on their part to drive us off, and it is said that all the heads from Constantinople are down to see the business. Things became lively in the trenches at 10.30 pm, but soon died down.

23RD The Turks' attack did not seem to come off. Today we decided to go on the cook's ration, and cease cooking our own food. I find I am cooking nearly all day, and many of the combine are too lazy to do their bit. We shall still be able to do any extra cooking for ourselves. In the afternoon I made a fireplace near our house. It is a fine affair, made out of a strong tin box, suitably cut, and a round tin for the chimney. The fireplace is neatly cemented round with clay. It works very well. Tonight Clements and I made porridge of powdered biscuits, and some coffee. It was a fine meal, but took a little preparing, since the biscuits needed powdering, and the coffee needed grinding. The Turks made a feeble attack on our left this afternoon, but were repulsed with loss.

24TH Uneventful day, but we received shells intermittently, and some were very near. They are expecting a big attack from Turks hourly, but it does not seem to come off. Had a letter from Mr Allen and postcard and paper from aunties tonight. Taube flew over at 5.15 am dropping two bombs. Fortunately it did not harm us. When I had been on night duty about an hour, a dozen high explosives came over. They seemed to be right on us. In the morning, I found that most of them had dropped in our camp. The nearest was about 200 yards beyond signal office.

25TH Sunday. Finished work at 6 am. We expect starting on some dried fruit rations. The addition today was stewed figs. Clements of Birmingham and I made boiled pudding for supper. We soaked biscuits all day, then made them into a dough after adding condensed milk. We placed this in a cloth after putting jam in the middle. We boiled it for about an hour. We had it for supper along with some coffee. Our coffee is absolutely fine, and equals any served at the cafes at home. In afternoon I had a walk to Romano's Well in the direction of firing line. Found a nice shell nose.

26TH Was on duty 2 pm to 10 pm. The Turks sent us a lot of shells throughout the day. We had rice pudding for supper.

JULY 1915

27TH Up at 6 am. Not much shelling. Had some porridge prior to breakfast. Went for a swim in the morning. Had jam pudding and coffee for supper.

28TH Uneventful day. A few shells over.

29TH Up at 6 am. Orders have come for us to return to Major Bray. It is a pity, because we have got a nice lot of stuff together. Packed up during the day, and wagon came after 7 pm. Of course we had a few office stores, and could not carry these with our kit. Reported at HCO and was told we could stay the night if we liked. I stayed with White and Edgar with Bill Sykes. We found numerous friends, including Jack, Colbert, Taffy &c. We got some tobacco given, and I was quite pleased, because we had been without for a few days.

30TH Up about 7 am. Had breakfast. We are on Hill 138, and have fine view of Achi Baba and the plains stretching in front. The Turks have just put three explosives on to the plain. They seem to be aiming at a herd of sheep which belong to the Hindus. Fortunately, no damage has been done. These sheep are about the size of a calf, and they seem half goat and half sheep. Came to W Beach and joined Headquarter Section. Edgar and I were fortunate to secure a fine dug, and with about an hour's work made it very presentable. We may have to leave however if the owners return from Imbros. The Turks sent in a lot of shells this morning, but they went over our heads and fell into the sea. Some of the ships had narrowly escaped. I received several letters, a lot of papers and a parcel, so am quite well off. We are short of water on this beach, so have to use sea water for washing ourselves and clothes. Had a very nice swim in the afternoon. We got some fine water which is dripping from the cliffs. It is run into a cement tank, and pumped on to the top for horses. A reservoir is being built near us. The beach is a very busy place, and there are railway lines running along the landing. Greeks are employed on labouring work on the landing. A non-observer cannot conceive what ingenuity is displayed in the work carried on down at the landing. There are a few boats and an aeroplane, and the *Dynatic* sunk just near the beach. A canteen is now open, but one has to wait hours in order to buy anything. Often there are as many as 300 waiting their turn. The camp is much hotter than our last one. In the evening I purchased 1 lb of grapes, 2 lbs of apples and a tin of strawberry jam for 2/11d, which was retailed by the QM. Had a walk to HCO to fetch remaining portion of our kit.

31ST We seem to be washouts here. We go on three parades, and occasionally carry a supply of water to the cook. Otherwise we stand by and wait orders. There is no water for washing or for washing clothes, so this has to be done in the sea. Had a nice swim in the morning and a sleep in the afternoon. Today has been the hottest day I have ever experienced. No one who has not experienced such heat can form an idea of it. Perspiration drips off even when

JULY/AUGUST 1915

we are in the shade and keeping still. Shells are plentiful here, but on the whole, everybody is fairly lucky. We were sitting on cliff top this morning, and one burst 200 yards behind us, and several splinters shot over our heads into the sea. Most of them seem to be directed at the shipping, but when fired from a distance of six miles, they fall anywhere within a mile. I was listed for guard at night, 7 pm to 6 am. I took last turn. Felt a bit energetic in the cool of the evening. I made a decent fireplace. There is ample material here including real cement. I hardly like to put much work in at things, as the sergeant major says we may be moving away any time.

AUGUST

1ST Finished guard at 6 am. On parade at 8.30 am. Had a sleep in the morning. We received several shells from time to time during the morning, but about 2.10 pm, one hit our signal office. It is in rather a dangerous place, being in the gully running up from West Beach. The explosive went through sandbags, corrugated iron and a wooden beam 1 ft thick. Six men were killed and four wounded. Young Eliot of New Zealand was killed instantly. Taylor of SC was badly wounded. The affair seemed to have an effect on the whole camp. The office was established in a new position towards evening. The new site is in the cliff side, going towards X Beach. Went for a swim in evening. Major Bray who was on sick list at Imbros, came over. He seems to have aged.

2ND Not on duty all day. In morning did some washing in the sea. The modus operandi was to get undressed and do the washing after jumping in. I got the things fairly clean after rinsing with fresh water. Had another swim in afternoon. In evening, had a walk along X and Y Beaches. They consist of beaches eight yards broad, and about three miles long. Cliffs about 60 ft high tower over the beaches. Along these beaches, hundreds of troops are quartered. We found a canteen at Gully Beach, and I got six tins of milk at 1/- each. Today there has been a bombardment from Gulf of Saros by our warships. Only a few stray shells were sent to our camp by the Turks. Was on duty 10 pm to 6 am. Sergeant said I could kip down when I arrived, as there was little doing, so I slept on the roof and was not roused till 6 am.

3RD Had swim in morning, and did some washing. I find clothes can be washed very well in the sea. Had a few nasty shells at noon. One came within 15 yards of our dugout. It lifted one wagon on the top of another. We are getting very good food, and we only have need to cook some supper, and make a drink at noon. Our meat is cooked in a field oven. This oven is a kind of arched tunnel covered with earth. A fire is made, and after burning for an hour is raked out. The meat is then put in, and the oven door is sealed with clay. The meat retains all its juices in this process, and we get stewed fruit for tea. This is very welcome. It is rumoured that 25,000 men have been landed

AUGUST 1915

between Y Beach and Gaba Tepe, so it is probable that the hill will be attacked from both sides.

4TH Up at 7 am. Had to receive some mails on the pier in the morning, but they did not turn up. Had a good swim. Annie from Asia sent about 12 shells over our heads. We got some heavy shelling in the afternoon, and had to lie low. When I was at the water tank, one dropped 15 yards short of Edgar and me. We got a shower of earth, but no splinters. Had a walk to HCO (Hill 138) in evening to exchange milk for tobacco.

5TH Up at 7 am. Very windy day. We get very bad sand storms on these days, and it is very unpleasant walking about. The whole view is obliterated by sand in the air. Had a swim in the morning. Some signal troops arrived to assist at our office. We seem to be overstaffed already. I was on duty 2 pm to 10 pm. Had very little work to do. Spent a lot of time trying to talk to a French telegrapher who is from Algeria.

6TH Up at 7 am. On 8.30 am parade. Did some sewing, and had a swim in the morning. Received pipe and tobacco from Madge. Very glad of the consignment, because tobacco is very scarce. Our signal office is on top of a cliff facing Gulf of Saros. In the afternoon the bombardment commenced. We could see the ships banging away. The bombardment was followed by an attack with a view to making a further advance on Achi Baba. We could see a lot of shrapnel and smoke on a high piece of ground up the coast. The Turks offered a strong resistance, and although we had banged hundreds of shells at them, a very small advance was made.

7TH All morning Monitors and Cruisers bombarding the hill. It was one smoking mass for hours. Very little advance was made. The Australians who landed at Gaba Tepe up the Gulf are not joined up to us by a few miles. They are at Anzac. A large number of our troops have been secretly landed at Salt Lake near Australians (this position is beyond Achi Baba). They have joined up with Anzac, and will no doubt endeavour to cut off Turkish supplies. A shell hit 8th Corps signal office towards evening, and Lt. Jackson of our Co. was badly wounded in spine and head.

8TH On duty 2 pm to 10 pm. Had quiet day. A few shells were over from Asia when we were swimming. We hear that the forces beyond Achi Baba have done exceedingly well.

9TH On duty 6 am to 2 pm. Taube flying overhead for about an hour. Bombardments were carried on from the Gulf of Saros on the Turks' position near Anzac during the morning, and Kum Kale was bombarded in afternoon. Had a dip in afternoon and did washing in sea.

AUGUST 1915

10TH Quiet day this side of hill. They are doing their best at the other side, and have gone inland three miles. Made a purchase of eggs and milk at canteen in afternoon. Had to wait two hours for my turn. Made trifle for supper.

11TH Been a soldier for a year. Have no regrets about enlisting, and have enjoyed the whole of the experience up to the present. Am having a rough time at this camp, seem to have had dysentery all the time, and am quite weak and have lost all my energy. Sometimes I nearly faint after a little exertion. Hope I shall soon be OK with change of food. Have no wish to go in hospital. It is illness that makes a fellow feel fed up with the life. Hope I shall not become one of the 'when-are-we-going-home?' men. One or two ships were bombarding in afternoon.

12TH Quiet day. Nothing doing this side of the hill. A bombardment seems to be progressing at Anzac. Had a swim in the evening.

13TH Frankie and Morris arrived this morning after 10 days' voyage. Took them to our camp to report their arrival. They seemed glad to get here at last. Nothing important to report.

14TH Quiet day. Begin to feel a bit stronger. Had an experience in evening. Was proceeding to 8th Corps along with Frankie and another, when a battery of four asiatic guns started shelling. We crossed the aerodrome which is a kind of plateau, and shells were bursting to our right. We had to bob down in order to escape splinters which were falling about us.

15TH Sunday. On duty 6 am to 2 pm then again 10 pm to 6 am Monday. Nothing much doing along the fronts. Spent afternoon writing letters &c. Did not receive any shells very near to camp.

16TH Able to get three hours' sleep on this turn, and a full sleep twice in the week. Our mails seem to have gone west. There are a lot of parcels overdue. We seem to get plenty of work while on duty. Figure messages of 400 words and even 700 words sometimes occur. [*These are messages which have been encoded into groups of figures.*] Had a very nice supper in evening of fried potatoes and coffee prior to going on duty.

17TH Had a sleep in the morning. Some fairly heavy shelling occurred between 2 and 3 pm. The missile came from Achi Baba and dropped in an area of about one square mile in which our camp was included. Very busy at night on tels.

18TH Nothing doing all day, but have heard good reports about France (unofficial). Received some cigs and papers from Mrs Bray's consignment. Was on

AUGUST 1915

duty all night, but as we were slack and it was my turn to go home, I went home at 11 pm.

19TH Up at 6 am . About 8.30 am Kilkenny and I set out for a walk. We, went to see Sedd el Bahr Fort and village. Found everything in ruins, and very little trace of anything Turkish. The French are quartered about the place. Went forward to Morto Bay, had a swim and continued on the coast to last observation post beyond de Tott's battery. Had a fine view of Kereves Dere Valley and the Asiatic coast. The Turks were about a mile from us. In the vicinity of the French batteries were hundreds of shell holes, and dozens of Turkish unexploded shells were lying about. The Turks have evidently paid great attention to the famous French 75 guns. I secured a French bayonet and a cooking pot from the plateau near Kereves Dere. The whole countryside is strewn with the litter of battle. Nothing much to report all day.

20TH Slept all morning. Had a swim in the afternoon. I caught a fish about 1 lb, so we had a fine supper of coffee *au lait*, fish and tomato soup.

21ST Received one letter and two papers. Quiet day, although something has been done up at Suvla. The weather gets much colder, and looks like rain at times.

22ND Sunday. Off duty all day. Had usual swim, and did a little cooking. Asia commenced shelling in the evening, but was soon silenced by the French and our destroyers.

23RD On duty 2 pm to 10 pm. Was inoculated against cholera in morning. No shelling all day.

24TH Quiet day. Had a look through Hindu camp, and found everything very quaint. They seem to spare no pains looking after comfort of themselves and horses. They are in no way childish like the jet black Senegalese. We exchanged jam for rice. Our work finished at 9 pm, and in future this turn will be 1.15 to 9 pm.

25TH Quiet day. Had a little rain in afternoon. Was on rations fatigue in morning. Felt very seedy in afternoon, no doubt due to thunder in the air.

26TH Went to Morto Bay for a swim in morning. Found French camp in that district much improved in appearance. Many of the chaps have made small gardens, which are neatly fenced round and carefully tended. Beans and potatoes are the chief objects of cultivation. The sea was rough in the afternoon, and covered with white horses. It appeared to be raining in the district of Imbros. Had a little rain after 10 pm.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1915

27TH Much cooler in the morning. I received a heavy mail yesterday and some more this morning. Very quiet day. Made dugout rainproof in the morning.

28TH Was on QM's fatigue in morning. Read news in morning that Germans were advancing towards Constantinople. That looks lively. Nothing startling happened all day. We received one packet of Woodbines each from Lady Hamilton.

29TH Sunday. Very quiet day. Monitor firing up at Suvla. Did some letter writing.

30TH On duty 6 am till 1.30 pm. Feeling fairly fit as regards health, but am kept awake early morning with rheumatic pains in back etc. Think I have plenty of stuff beneath me in dugout, but evidently damp comes from somewhere.

31ST Quiet day. Made a bed of poles and wire. Hope to sleep more comfortably.

SEPTEMBER

1ST Quiet day. Did quite a lot of cooking. There is absolutely no fighting. I have found my bed very comfortable, although it is very narrow in order to fit the dug. It has cured the pains in my back.

2ND Cooler day, and a little firing from Asia in afternoon. Edgar and I both received parcels, so we are set up.

3RD Nothing fresh all day.

4TH Very rough sea today. The mail has not arrived. I spent two hours waiting at canteen for eggs and milk, also some golden syrup which is very nice with boiled puddings.

5TH Sunday. Worked 6 am to 1 pm. Also 8.45 pm to 6 am.

6TH Quiet day except for a few shells from Asia in evening. A 4.2 nose landed in our camp. Had a sleep in morning, and swam in afternoon. Received four letters and four papers.

7TH Quiet day. Nothing doing all round.

8TH Quiet day. Very little sunshine and very cold. Nothing doing on the front.

SEPTEMBER 1915

9TH Nothing doing all day. Find it very cold at night in the signal office. We have open spaces for doors and windows.

10TH No fighting and no shelling. Heavy wind all day. Everything covered with sand and dust. The flies seek refuge in our dugout, and we get nearly blinded and choked with sand. I felt very seedy, no doubt due to getting cold with sleeping in the signal office. Had a very rough windy night, and shall not be sorry when this week's duty is over.

11TH Nothing to report.

12TH Sunday. Finished duty at 6 am and off till 2 pm. Had a full dress parade at 9 am. Spent a very quiet day. Our meat ration was cut off and bully [*corned beef*] substituted. We made a fine meal of fried bully and onions, rice pudding and coffee. We heard a big attack was coming off on Wednesday. Large guns would be taken up tonight, and there would be a small attack in the morning to find out where enemy's guns are. Twenty Monitors are to be engaged in Wednesday's bombardment. An attempt will be made to force the narrows.

13TH A bombardment came off at 5 am, and several big guns have moved up. We are on bully again today, but it was nicely stewed with onions and went down OK. Am on duty 1.15 to 9 pm. Was on navying fatigue for a few hours in morning. Very fine warm day today. There was great excitement in office this afternoon. A motor launch with some Red Cross nurses aboard passed half a mile away. We haven't seen a member of the fair sex for three months. There was much waving.

14TH Got some letters. Had a busy time in the signal office. Elaborate preparations are being made for the coming attack. Some howitzers are going to Anzac, and we are getting plenty of bombs and ammunition over the job. It rained during the night for a few hours, and we got our feet wet, as the dugout is not covered at one end.

15TH Preparations are still being made for the attack. Very quiet day and fairly cold.

16TH Fairly warm day. Nothing to report all day.

17TH Quiet day. Preparations are still being made for an attack, but it does not come off.

18TH Mail in. Received a letter and a paper. Edgar been off colour for a long time, so he reported sick this morning. Was told he had jaundice and would have to go to Mudros. I hope he will soon be better. Am now on my own.

SEPTEMBER 1915

Had chance to take another partner but declined. It is a mistake, and in future I shall go on my own. I have been doing nearly all the work for a long time.

19TH Sunday. Quiet day. French ship *République* hit two Turkish guns. The monitors were firing at Suvla and Anzac way. There is no doubt that preparations are being made for a big attack. We have been getting in big stocks of shells. There are many thousand boxes stored at the roadside near our signal office.

20TH On duty 6 am to 1 pm. Very cold windy morning. Received parcel from Miss Reid. Enjoyed the Kiosk coffee very much. Quiet day as regards shelling &c. I made a lamp to burn bacon fat. It worked very well.

21ST Very seedy all day, and could not touch any food. Slept nearly all spare time and felt better towards the night.

22ND Fairly cool day, and felt very weak, and was very sick. Managed to take some warm milk. Felt a little better towards evening. The situation is unchanged as regards the front.

23RD Exceedingly cold morning. Have discarded boy scout's pants for warmer togs. Feeling a little better, and was able to take some milk and bread. A very heavy wind has been blowing all day. We get covered with sand and dust. It is most objectionable. The night falls about 7 pm now, and it comes in terrifically cold. I have pulled down my blind, and am going to bed about 7.30 pm tonight. There is nothing else to do and it is the warmest place.

24TH Bitterly cold weather. High wind and heavy seas. Everybody is chilled through. We have no windows and doors in our office, and it is open to the weather. Feeling a little better today, but can't smoke, and can eat very little. Had an hour's walk in evening along the part known as X Beach. It is a kind of marine drive. We have millions of shells packed along the roadside.

25TH Not quite so cold. Was able to take a little solid food, but feel exceedingly weak. At dinner time I received a tin of pineapples and one of pears, being my share of a parcel from Alexandria tradesmen. Had pineapple, bread and butter for dinner. One of the chaps had ordered some butter in this parcel. It was a treat. We hear a rumour of our Company being relieved from CSW office on Wednesday. It may mean a move for us.

26TH Worked 6 am to 1.15 pm and 8.45 pm to 6 pm Monday. There has been much rejoicing among the Greek labourers on the peninsula. I saw an airship today. I think it is stationed on Tendros, and was having a trial trip. Spent Sunday afternoon cleaning up my abode. Had a very nice tea of bread and butter and tinned pears and cream. Went on duty at 8.45 pm.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1915

27TH Fairly warm day. Had sleep in morning. I have been taking a constitutional walk for a few days. This afternoon, went along the sea front up Gulf of Saros for about three miles to Gurkha Bluff the whole coastline is composed of rugged cliffs, from 20 to 60 feet high for miles along the coast. The Army have made a kind of marine drive at the base of the cliffs. It is a magnificent feat of engineering. I passed through the Greek labour camp. There are about 1,500 of these gentlemen. I also saw one of the famous caterpillar traction engines working. We received news today of the big success in France. [*The British Army was advancing against the German 6th Army at Loos, and the French were attacking Vimy Ridge.*] To celebrate this event, each battery group fired a salvo of 21 rounds on certain objectives at 7 pm prompt. All the men in the trenches gave way to cheers. It was a fine sight, and no doubt the Turks felt very nervous when the guns suddenly commenced speaking from all points of peninsula.

28TH Went for a walk and had a swim in morning. Was on fatigue in the afternoon. After loading stores for embarkation to Imbros. On duty at night, and kept busy. Managed three hours' sleep.

29TH On fatigues again in morning cleaning up QM's store, and filling in dugouts. On fatigue in afternoon, but the corporal let me slide off, because I had not had much sleep. Spent a very enjoyable evening in Morris's dugout. Three of us were chatting all night. Our office was closed at 6 am this morning, and the wires were taken over by the 8th Corps. Now we are without a job, and will have to level the camp up after the departure of several batches to Imbros GHQ.

30TH We were to leave for Imbros today, but our departure has been postponed until the N15 section leave. I am not sorry, because Imbros is rather a strict camp, and cooking is not allowed. This morning we filled in two large holes, and I quite enjoyed the manual work. In afternoon, worked for about of an hour, and was dismissed, so we had a good swim. The weather has become quite warm again. Spent the evening in Morris's dug, and although we have nothing to do, we seem to be able to chat until 10 pm. We got a few Asiatic shells quite near the camp at 7pm.

OCTOBER

1ST Did very little work all day. Heard we leave tomorrow. Spent the evening visiting the French telegraphists, and afterwards had a chat in Morris's dugout.

2ND Dismantled six tents in morning, which we had to take with us. Six of us, all pals, left a 4 pm and arrived on the island of Imbros at 7 pm at K Beach pier. All our kit was carried on a wagon. We tramped on the dusty road to the

OCTOBER 1915

new RE camp. There we found about 50 of our chaps who had been there a few days. Tea and stew was ready for us, and we were soon quite happy. On the whole it is one of the easiest journeys I have ever made with full kit. We were quartered in a tent for the night.

3RD Up at 6.30 am, and found we were quartered in a peaceful valley covered with scrub and trees. The scenery is beautiful, mountainous, wild and rugged. The rocks are igneous. In fact I should say the whole island was of volcanic origin. There are a few cottages about 200 yards from the camp up the valley. The people seem to be farmers, and have sheep, cows and goats. They seem very clean, although their houses are very small. I purchased some goat milk cheese when going to the village for water. Went down to YMCA in afternoon, but found it was rather a dirty place run by Greeks. I purchased some buns for tea, and we managed a very nice Sunday meal, which included tinned fruits and cakes which chaps had received in parcels. Had another walk down to YM in the evening. We spent morning erecting six tents, and as far as we know, will be on navvying work for a few days.

4TH Up at 6.30 am digging with picks and shovels all morning. The ground is volcanic and like iron, but we only work steadily. Carrying stores for building in wheelbarrow in afternoon at new General Headquarters. Am enjoying the life very much, and only hope we keep on this work. There is a fairly large village about four miles away named Panygea. It is out of bounds though, and can only be visited by pass from the Officer Commanding.

5TH Having a nice time digging all day at our own camp. We are levelling the hillside to make a cookhouse.

6TH Same work today. I am enjoying it very much. Two of us have received orders to go to GHQ signal office for a few days, taking full kit. I am very sorry to leave, and hope I shall be able to get back with the boys.

7TH Left for K Beach pier at 9 am. Took ferry across to GHQ part of the island. One Turkish officer and two men accompanied us in motor boat. They seem in good condition. We arrived GHQ signal office, and after reporting were instructed to come on duty 10 pm to 8 am. Got fixed in a tent which was fairly decent, but most of the tents were in bad condition. The camp is on sand, and does not compare with our own camp at K Beach. Most of the chaps have never been on the peninsula, and do not seem as hospitable as others we have been with. Money is nearly finished, and grub is poor here. However I hope to get a sub shortly.

8TH Had about three hours' sleep during the night. Finished work at 8 am. In morning went to canteen and spent my last 2/-. Went on duty 6 pm to 10

OCTOBER 1915

pm. About 7.30 pm, a bad thunderstorm came on, and lifted many tents. My tent was blown down, but the other chaps erected it before 10 pm. It was a miserable place. Kit and blankets were wet. I got down to sleep and managed a few hours.

9TH Was on fatigues for two hours in morning. Am fed up with this camp. The grub and cooking are awful. We are troubled with sand and flies. I have got a touch of dysentery again. Went to bed early.

10TH Up at 6 am. On duty 8 am to 1 pm. After dinner went and walked along beach to YMCA. The RND band gave a few selections. I had tea there, and quite enjoyed the outing. On duty 10 pm to 8 am. Got two hours' sleep, and owing to the red tape and general awkwardness of the bosses, we have to sleep in the open. We could easily be allowed four hours' sleep on this morning's duty. The conditions, cooking and food at this camp are disgraceful. The majority of chaps would rather put up with anything than go on the peninsula. It is amusing to see them get the wind up when a Taube is signalled.

11TH Finished work at 8 am. On again at 6 to 10 pm. Very busy at the office. Am having a very rough time here with dysentery, and cannot purchase any milk, which is the best food to take. Nobody can realise what the complaint is like unless they have suffered. However, I am doing my best to get better. We are having very cool weather at present. There are occasionally very heavy rain and thunderstorms. On duty 1 pm to 6 pm today. Very cold night. Found two blankets insufficient.

13TH On duty 8 am to 1 pm. Feeling very poorly, and have not got rid of dysentery. I would go to hospital, but should no doubt get a worse time there. Think I should be OK once I could get some milk. Our camp is on a spit of low-lying sand about a mile wide, with the sea on either side. We get very cold winds. However, I hope to move in a few days. Worked 10 pm to 8 am. Very bleak night.

14TH Left at 8 am for K Beach canteen, and purchased biscuits, paste and butter, also some milk from a friend. Got back at 11 am. Very cold wind all day. Worked 6 to 10 pm.

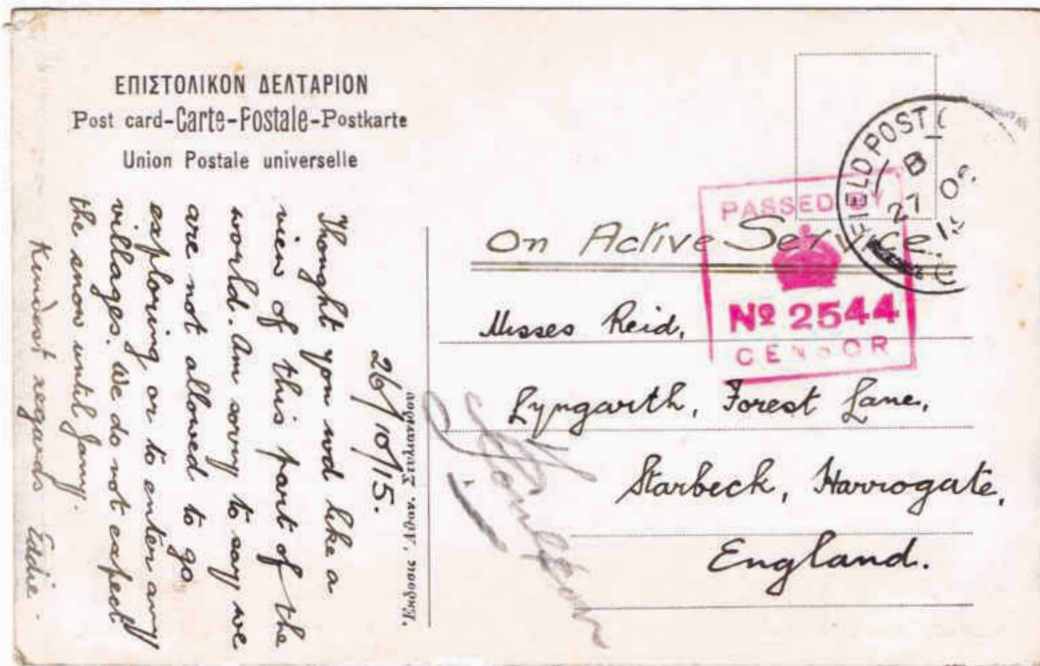
15TH Worked 1 to 6 pm. Received orders that our relief will move to new signal camp in morning.

16TH Up at 6.30 am. Struck two tents and paraded at sergeant's office at 8 am for an hour's duty. Left for pier, and went by ferry to K Beach. Arrived at new signal office, and after having dinner at my old camp, worked 1 to 6 pm. We



ΙΜΒΡΟΣ. Άποψη Άγριδίων.

IMBROS. Vue d' Agridia Snowed.



Postcard home, reviewed and passed by the censor.

OCTOBER 1915

were allotted to a large marquee for sleeping purposes. I went to camp where my kit was, and stayed for bed and breakfast. Had a good night's rest.

17TH Up at 6 am. On duty 8 am to 1 pm. Got permission to live at my old camp. Worked 10 pm to 8 am.

18TH Finished at 8 am . Cleaning up all day. Worked 6 pm to 10 pm. Think I have been put on relief permanently.

20TH Worked 8 am to 1 pm. Received orders to live at GHQ camp, so had to move again. Was on duty 10. pm to 8 am, but felt too poorly to go. I shall have to see the doctor in the morning.

21ST Went to see doctor. Got some pills, duty and medicine. I hear there has been an advance at Suvla. [*Suvla is in the north of the Gallipoli Peninsula. In fact, success was short-lived, and allied troops withdrew on 20 December.*]

22ND Continuing on these duties. Beginning to feel a little better in health. We had heavy wind and rain today, but we are living in EP tents, so we need not fear the rain. This camp has many comforts, such as washing places and plenty of drinking water. The food is not of first class quality, neither is the cooking, but we hope to be able to buy some canteen goods in a few days. At present the canteen is sold out.

23RD Up at 6 am and on duty at 8 am. Extremely cold morning. Had a purple wash in the open air. On duty 10 pm to 8 am.

24TH Got off duty at 7 am. Had sleep in the morning. Heavy bombardment appears to be going on at Suvla. Later on heard that the advance had been made. Worked 6 to 10 pm. Had a lot of rain, and the weather is extremely cold.

25TH Warm and sunny day. Quite a welcome change from what we have had for the last few days. Made a bed this morning, as I find sleeping on the ground has a bad effect on one's stomach. Received good parcel from home.

26TH On at 8 am. Fine day, but dull. Sent some postcards home. Think an attack will be coming off shortly.

27TH Finished work at 8 am. Mild weather. Did my washing in the afternoon, and worked all night.

28TH The new Commander in Chief (General Munro) arrived this morning. Am feeling fairly well settled here, but it is worse than Aldershot for red tape.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1915

Our kit is placed out in a special way every day for an inspection. One would think our things are given us for inspection, and not for use. This is one of the disadvantages of living at GHQ.

29TH Nothing fresh today.

30TH Fine day. Heavy bombardment taking place at the Cape.

31ST Was on short turn today 1 to 6 pm, so was able to attend church parade at 9 am in the camp, and evensong at the YM. Enjoyed the services very much.

NOVEMBER

1ST Fine fresh morning. There are three parcels waiting for me at the other camp. Received them later in the morning. I am really fortunate to get so many good things. Was asked yesterday if I was willing to learn Polsen Wireless System, and I expressed a desire to do so. Was sent back to new RE camp this morning, and will be navvying for a few days, then commence the Polsen System. I was sorry to leave my bed and leave an EP tent, and come back into a bell tent, but life here is much easier, and the boys are better. Got settled down, and felt quite at home.

2ND Up at 6 am, and on 6.30 am parade. Commenced work at 9 am, which consists of moving stores in a barrow. Assisted in making a terrace in afternoon. Enjoyed the work very much. Received three letters and some papers. Making the terrace in the morning. Continued digging throughout, the day. Enjoyed myself, and am feeling very fit. Spent most of my time reading.

4TH Navvying all day. Had some rain during dinner hour. Have been stonewalling today.

5TH Commenced wireless work at 9 am. Received some instruction in tuning the instrument, and was able to read a few code messages that were flying about. The officer gave us a short lecture on the theory.

6TH Wireless instruction all day. Had a look at the Polsen instrument.

7TH Sunday. On inspection parade at 9.30 am. Went for a swim in morning, and did washing in afternoon, and wrote letters. We are having fine weather.

8TH Wireless instruction all day. Had a walk to YMCA, and enjoyed some music.

9TH Having a nice time, and doing very little work. Removed into another tent amongst wireless men.

NOVEMBER 1915

10TH Rainy and dull. Had some good instruction in W/T [*Wireless Telegraphy*] during morning. In evening, a concert was held in our camp. The singers and music were absolutely fine. Everybody was pleased with this first concert, and it is hoped there will be more to follow.

11TH Instruction all day. Had a walk to K Beach in evening.

12TH Went up at 7 am to tap the German wireless from Constantinople. Very little news came through this morning. Had some rainy weather. Commenced duty at W9 today, four hours on and eight off. The station is situated on a hill quite near to camp. It is a Marconi pack set. We had no real work to do. There appears to be no work to transmit, and nobody sends us anything. We only listen in and take down any message that is flying about. My duty is 8 to 12 pm. Received pay today, 30/-.

13TH Am getting into the wireless work now that I have a station to work on. Quiet day, nothing doing.

14TH Sunday. Working today. Weather fairly cool.

15TH Very windy day. Roof of wireless hut blew off while I was on duty. No damage done.

16TH Calm fine day. Sent my first wireless message this morning. Am liking the work fairly well, but it seems silly to have us up all night for no useful purpose. Heard that the 52nd Division made a slight advance today.

17TH Very windy day. Had difficulty to keep the tents from going up. Had a little rain in evening. It was as if a fire hose had been turned on our tents. They are standing the strain very well. Sent several messages on W/T today, and also gleaned a little knowledge about the motor.

18TH Very fine and bright day after the stormy night. I like the wireless work very much, although the duties are bad, and break our sleep every night. There is nothing new happening here. Finished reading *Sir Nigel* [*Conan Doyle*]. Have enjoyed it thoroughly.

19TH Fine bright day, but cool. Managed to get some canteen stores – margarine, pineapple and sardines. We hear that mails dated 21 and 22 October have gone down with a ship between Alex and Mudros.

20TH Nothing new to report. Very cold and windy all day.

21ST Sunday. Very cold and windy day. The Turks attacked the Australians at

NOVEMBER 1915

Anzac, using some new heavy guns. The sea was so rough that no reinforcements could be landed. However, it is rumoured that no material progress was made by the enemy. It came in very cold today.

22ND Worked 4 to 8 am this week. Find it very cold working through the night. I have never experienced such a keen wind as we are getting now. In afternoon went for a long tramp in order to get warm.

23RD Still cold and windy. Short ration of water, and no fresh meat. In fact we get no water for washing or drinking. Tea is supplied twice a day. I am doing my best to keep fit, but seem to have a cold in my bones.

24TH Weather somewhat warmer today, and no wind. I am very feverish this morning, and stayed off work at 4 am. Felt seedy all day.

25TH On duty at 4 am. Received press from Austria (Wien) and Hornsea (Portsmouth). Received orders to prepare for moving to Mudros on 27th with my section (N13). Inspection of kit today. Am feeling awfully weak and run down. We expect leaving tomorrow. Took a day's rest today.

27TH Had the night of our lives last night. A thunderstorm lasted from 5 to 9 pm. It lightened and thundered the whole of the time. It also rained and blew as I have never known it to do before. Our kits got very wet, owing to the water swilling through the tents in rivers. We managed to get a little sleep, but it was a dirty night. We fixed up our tent this morning, and dug a trench round. It rained on and off all day, and was very cold. Had a dirty night again. It commenced with a small rain which came right through the tent. In fact it was dripping on us while we lay in bed.

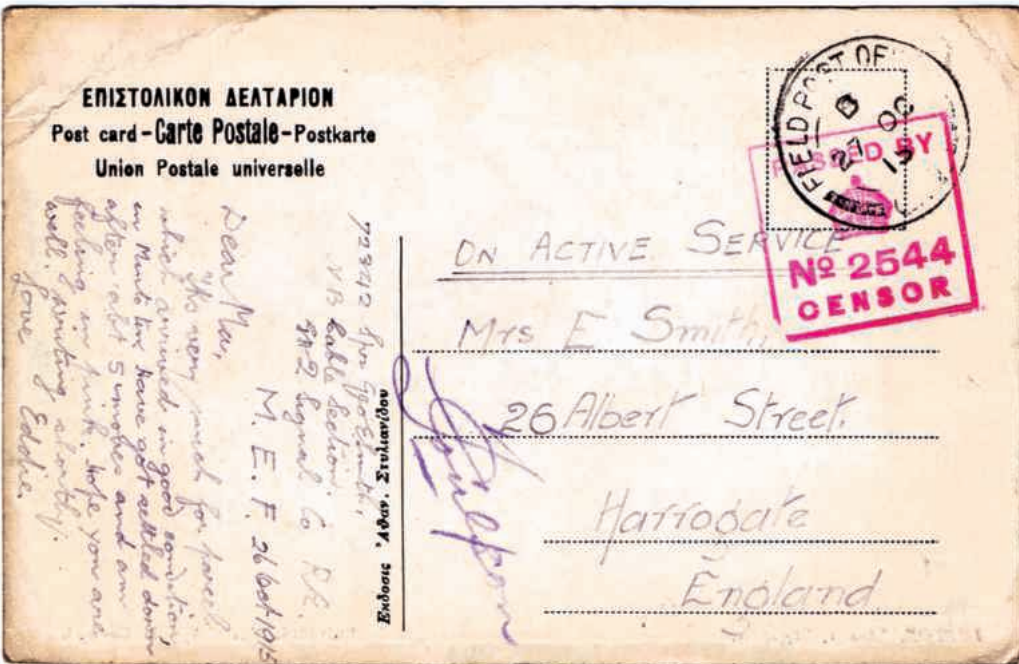
28TH Sunday. Wet in morning. We woke up to find things covered with snow. The hills looked fine. I had a walk as far as K Beach and encountered a wind which is colder and keener than anything I have known. Towards night, the wind became exceedingly rough, and the ground commenced to freeze. Everything frozen this morning, including ourselves. The tent still stands, although it is having an exceedingly rough time. It continued cold and windy all day. I made a stove to burn charcoal and we managed to win a little charcoal, so we went to bed warm.

30TH Calm bright day, but very cold and frosty. During the morning we had to pack our kit, and two wagons, and move off to the pier, but the Vice Admiral had just issued orders for the trawler to sail at once, so we had to come back. We go tomorrow at 8.30 am.



ΙΜΒΡΟΣ. 'Αποψη 'Αγριδίων.

IMBROS, Vue d' Agridia Snowed.



ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΝ ΔΕΛΤΑΡΙΟΝ

Post card - Carte Postale - Postkarte

Union Postale universelle

Dear Mrs,
I'm very much for you,
I've arrived in good condition,
in Nanté but have got settled down
after a bit of 5 weeks and am
feeling in pink. Hope you are
well & putting things
love
Edgie.

23312 for you
1/13 Kable Section,
542 Signal Co RE
M. E. F. 26 Oct 1915

Εκδοσις Αθην. Στυλιανίδου

ON ACTIVE SERVICE

Mrs E Smith

26 Albert Street

Harrogate

England

FIELD POST OFFICE
20 30 51
No 2544
CENSOR

DECEMBER 1915

DECEMBER

1ST Up at 6.30am. Soon had our baggage on the quay. Left on trawler about 11 am. It was a calm bright day, and fairly warm out at sea. I had a sleep amongst the baggage. Was glad to get my bones warmed through. Arrived in Mudros Bay about 6 pm. We got awfully cold with having to remain on deck all the time. We anchored alongside *HMS Europe* for about an hour, and put off some RNAS men. We then moored to *HMS Aragon* and after about an hour's wait shipped our gear aboard her, and went on ourselves. We got a warm meal. I had two hours' guard to do, so slept on deck in the open air. I had a fine night.

2ND Waited about all day on *Aragon*. I got orders just as dusk fell. Landed ashore about 6.15 pm, and had lot of heavy work carrying our stores. Stayed at RE's Details camp near Mudros town. Slept well.

3RD Up at 6 pm. Went out to *SS Minnetonka* to assist with the drawing of stores. Spent a nice day. Had a good wash in the afternoon.

4TH Our camp is just outside Mudros village. We are not allowed to go in. There is a large Greek church, and a few decent size houses. All except three of us are going to Castro today. We go tomorrow. GHQ is to be at Castro. It is a town of about 10,000 inhabitants, and on the coast. We expect a fairly decent time there. I borrowed a pass from a chap and had a look around Mudros. There are some decent houses and shops. The Greeks look fairly clean.

5TH Got wagon packed with telegraphy stores, and left for Castro, which is at the other side of the island, about 10.30 am. The place is about 18 miles from Mudros, and as the road goes through some mountains, some big gradients are met with. The journey was full of interest. Greek travellers kept passing us. They are usually mounted on donkeys. The dress during this cold weather appears to be sheepskin jackets and the usual kind of shirt, which is gathered round the knees, and has the appearance of a pair of baggy shorts. We stayed half way at Livandy, and had some tea in the village. It was flavoured with cloves and tasted like medicine. We arrived at Castro before dusk. It is a fine little town of about 5,000 inhabitants. One sees both Greeks and Turks seated in the bars. The place has a fine appearance from a distance. The square whitewashed houses with red tiled roofs have a peculiar Greek appearance. One finds the streets narrow and dirty. Drink, chiefly Koniak, can be bought in almost all the shops. I had a very interesting look round the place this evening.

6TH Spent morning building a telephone line to the barracks, which, is a huge building and has probably been a hotel. Did some signwriting in the after-

DECEMBER 1915

noon. Had a walk round the town in the evening. Got down some very dark streets. Everything is very expensive. In fact about four times English prices.

7TH Find the weather very mild here. Was able to have a bath this afternoon, and have put my washing out to a lady who lives near camp. We are having splendid food at present. We are able to buy a few things to enable the cooks to put some good meals before us. Am sorry to say we are in need of a sub. I had a good night out tonight. Went into dozens of shops and only spent a few coppers. We do our best to impress upon the shopkeepers that their prices are too high for us.

8TH Very little work to do today. Made a bed in afternoon, and wrote letters in the evening.

9TH I was camp orderly today, so had to stay in and clean up. Managed to learn a little Greek from some of the boys about the camp.

10TH Quiet day today. Assisted with some wiring at the barracks. Have got a slight touch of some kind of fever. Hope it will clear off.

11TH Quiet day. Had afternoon off. Went for a walk around the beaches, and saw a fisherman drawing a net. It was a poor catch.

12TH Sunday. Had a quiet day. Spent an interesting afternoon watching the people in their Sunday attire. Saw a small octopus. They are plentiful here.

13TH Putting up lines in the town all day. Quite enjoyed my work.

14TH Quiet day. The weather is beautifully warm, but it seems very treacherous. I woke up very seedy and with a sore throat. Our officer purchased two turkeys today, 35/- for two, for us at Christmas.

15TH Was camp orderly today. Have heard we are moving to Alex, which is to be the GHQ, owing to the reverses in Serbia. [*Serbia had been overrun by the combined forces of Bulgaria, Austria Hungary and Germany.*]

16TH Laying lines all day in the town. Quite enjoyed the work.

17TH Laying telephone lines again. In the morning we laid a line from the castle, which is situated at the top of a huge rocky hill. It was a warm climb. The castle grounds contain some old cannon and cannon balls. It was no doubt impregnable in the old days, but could easily be blown to pieces now. We see plenty of Greeks and Turks in our travels. The children are a miserable lot, and usually have sore eyes. The women spend most of their time sitting about in dirty back streets, or carrying water.

DECEMBER 1915

18TH Had a job at the barracks. We had to buy some cable from the electric light people. It was a pick and shovel job. The barracks are being fitted up by local workmen, supervised by our men. We had a very nice time, and got into conversation with Greeks, Turks and Hindus. Had a walk round the town in the evening. Finished reading *The Morals of Marcus Ordeyne*. [WJ Locke.]

19TH Out to reel in some lines, but it was found unnecessary. We were then sent to pick up a lot of telegraph slips that were blowing about the beach. Was sent out to the field REs today. The various members of the General Staff are going to live in houses in the town. They seem to be taking mansions which have been occupied by Turks. Some of the houses are sumptuously furnished. The Field REs have to do with fitting things up. I am lent to them to sign-write the notices showing who lives at various houses.

20TH I have 90 signs to do before Christmas Day and am working with poor brushes and paints. Have managed 28 of them today.

21ST Painting again today. Have a nice room to myself at the Director of Works' office. The Greeks seem to be coming to Castro in dozens. They are evidently seeking work. New shops are opening in all directions, and the shopkeepers are getting in loads of stores for the English Christmas. They hold their Christmas festival about 13 days after ours. We are going to have a good time, but am anxiously waiting for pay.

22ND About 10.30 am this morning news came that all work has to cease, and all our lines had to be dismantled, as GHQ was not going to be at Castro. We took all our wires down by tea time.

23RD In morning we had an hour's notice to pack up, and be ready to start for Mudros. We only had one wagon for stores and kit, so the men had to walk or ride cycles. I had a bike, and managed the 25km without feeling tired. We arrived about 6 pm. I met old friends from all parts. My wireless pals are here and going to Salonica with a pack set. Troops have been withdrawn Anzac and Suvla, and we have left the two positions without any appreciable casualties. We were put in a very damp tent. I was kept awake with rheumatics. We got a very poor reception from our GHQ Signals, although we had treated them very well when they came to Castro.

24TH Got up at about 8 am. It was raining. We erected a few tents after our meagre breakfast of bacon and biscuits. Our prospects for a Christmas feed are very poor. Bully and biscuits for dinner today, biscuits and tea for tea. We have no money, but we are still merry and bright. We went to the PO, and found chaos reigning there, but we managed to find two bags for NB. I

DECEMBER 1915

received a parcel from home, 30 October. It contained two cakes, so we were assured of something for tea. We got three parcels amongst five of us in our tent, so we have done fairly well.

25TH Got up for breakfast. A band was playing, and it sounded like Christmas. We had a fine dinner which consisted of steak and boiled onions, also 1 lb of *Daily News* plum pudding. The pudding was fine. Those who wished could get a pint of beer for 3d. For tea we had bread, jam and two kinds of cake, also stewed beef. We are having a fine day. This is some Christmas! The two positions Anzac and Suvla are fully evacuated, and I have seen many friends from both places. We have lost very few men, but from what I hear, thousands of pounds worth of stores have been destroyed and gone west. A man who left Helles yesterday says the Turks are sending some shells and shrapnel over.

26TH Received orders to be ready with full kit at 9 am. We paraded together about 40 GHQ men. We got on board about 1 pm. The ship, which is one of the Blue Funnel boats, is named *SS Ascanius* or HMT Z61. We are carrying about 1,800 troops, also about 50 officers of the General Staff. The troops are mostly Australian Infantry and New Zealand Infantry and REs. Also a lot of miscellaneous men. Slept in a hammock once again, and found it OK. Was on signal duty midnight to 4 am.

27TH Up at 6 am. We have had a fine day. The boat is clean and the grub fine. For tea we had our two turkeys and hen cooked. It was a fine meal. The Australians are a fine set. Many of them are a bit wild. We see them playing at crown and anchor or pitch and toss. They usually bet in pounds or 10/—, and a chap many a time wins a year's wage in a few hours.

28TH Slept on promenade deck all night. It was very warm. Got up at 4.30 am owing to the washee deck men. Had a cold bath in the moonlight. We began to roll very much at about noon. At 3 pm were instructed to wear life belts all day, and sleep with them at night, owing to the submarines. However we don't worry about such trifles, and if we are in a little danger, it does not prevent us from enjoying the trip. I finished reading *Pearl Maiden* [*H Rider Hagard*] also *Beside the Bonny Brier Bush* [*Ian MacLaren*]. *Pearl Maiden* has been very interesting, because the scene is pitched in the east. Ian MacLaren's stories of Scottish village life are really fine. Even in my travels, I have had the pleasure of meeting the cautious Scotsman. There is something very fine about MacLaren's description of humble workers. They all have some claim to learning, and take an intelligent interest in things such as poetry and preaching.

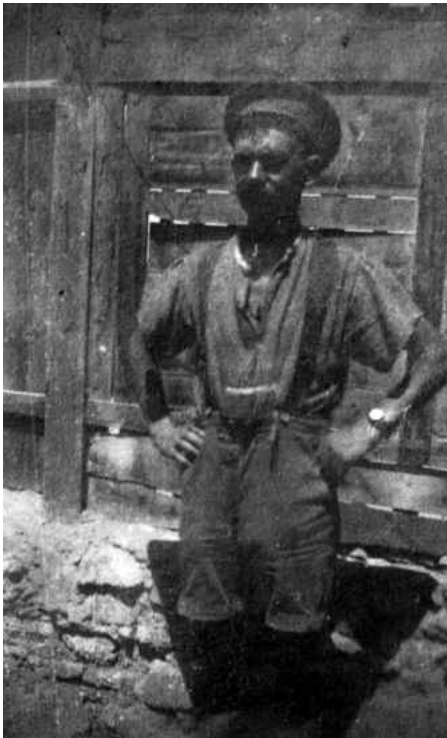
29TH Slept on promenade deck again. Up at 4.30 am, and had a cold shower-bath. It was fine. We sighted land about 7 am, and were in the harbour of

DECEMBER 1915

Alexandria about 10am. Got ready to disembark, but orders did not come. The Australians and New Zealanders were shipped into a train for Ismailia. Guards were put on the ship to prevent anybody going ashore, but I think most of Colonials had a look round.

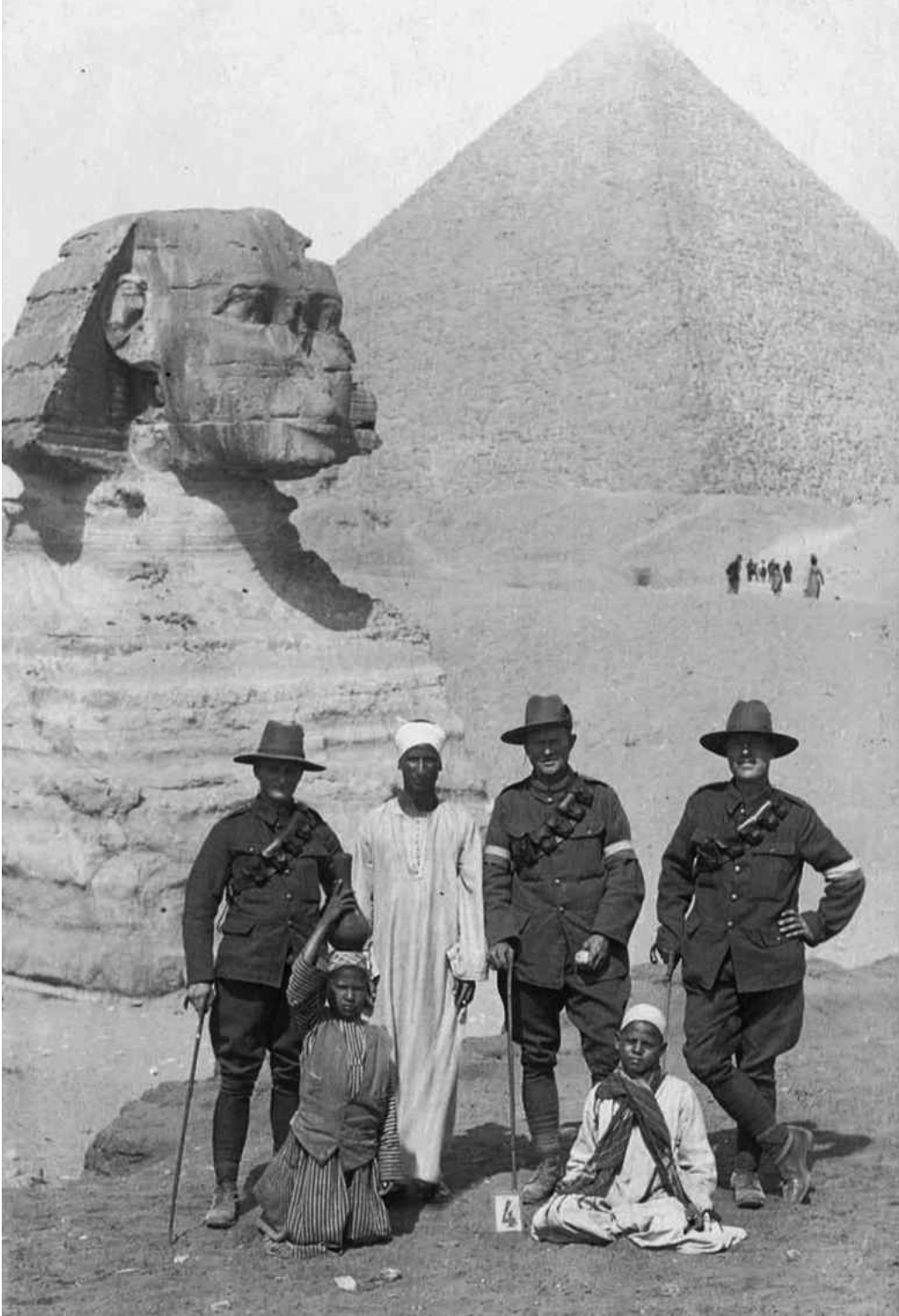
30TH Had been guard over some baggage all night. We disembarked about 9 am, and got up to Cleopatra Camp about 3 pm. We had a very heavy day, carrying kit about. We were detailed to carry a load of about eight tons of luggage belonging to the General Staff. I find things very much changed at Cleopatra. Troops can be seen drilling, learning flag signalling and doing many more useless things. We finished work as it became dark. A limited number of passes were issued for the town. I stayed at home.

31ST Spent most of the day putting tents up. Had a fine swim this afternoon. It is quite an experience to swim on the last day of the year. In the evening, had a look round the town, and went to the American Cosmography. Saw a Scottish horseboy, and got him to direct us to their camp. It was at Sidi Bishr, which is a few miles beyond Cleopatra. We soon found Alec McNaughton and his brother. Alec is QMS and his brother is Squadron SM. We were heartily received, and stayed to see the New Year in. We left about 2.30 am, and got home at 3.30 am.



Jock Morrison.





1916

JANUARY

1ST Up at 6.30 am, and groomed a horse at morning stables. I was asked to go and work at the cookhouse for about a week. It is a big affair, and has a roll of about 400, so I welcomed the job. There was plenty of work, but I managed to get a swim. Stayed in at night and wrote letters.

2ND Had some rain during the day, but rain is no inconvenience, as things soon dry up. I am enjoying Alex. The climate is fine. It is a treat when there is no cold to worry about. Had a nice supper a few minutes' walk from camp.

3RD Very wet day. Received fine cake from Madge. Learned a little Arabic from some natives.

4TH Rained nearly all day. Had hard work to keep the fires burning. Cooking is a rough job under present conditions. Spent evening in camp.

5TH Had another fairly heavy day, with plenty of rain. We only have log wood supplied for cooking purposes, and the rain is so heavy, the fires soon die out.

6TH Received pay today £4 16s (468 piastres). It seemed nice to have some money once again. Five of us had a good dinner at an Italian restaurant at a cost of 120 piastres, and afterwards went to the American Kursaal, where there is a kind of variety entertainment. Arrived in camp about 1 am.

7TH Finished cooking at noon today, as there was some painting to do. We have to be packed up tonight, ready to move away.

A visit to Cairo. Eddie is on the right (see diary entry 7th March 1916).

JANUARY 1916

8TH Worked all day from 6.30 am until 5 pm. Did some shopping in the evening.

9TH Nothing fresh today. Had a walk round town at night.

10TH We move tomorrow. I go down to station at 2 pm today to be on guard over wagons. Got weighed. Scaled 11 stone 11 lb. Did not send the wagon after all, so I had a nice evening in town.

11TH Up at 5 am. Striking tents, and packing up. Left camp at 8 am, and got entrained by 11 am. We are going to Ismailia. The train left at 1 pm. The journey was about 200 miles. The country was flat the whole of the way. At first there was plenty of water, which was no doubt an overflow from some arm of the Nile. We passed many small villages. The houses appear to be built with mud. We passed through many miles of irrigated land which seemed very fertile. We saw many camels, which are used as beasts of burden. The latter part of the journey was made in the dark, but we appear to be travelling over the desert. The chief towns on our journey were Damenhur, Tel el Baroud, Zagazig and Tel el Kebir. We arrived at about 10 pm at Ismailia siding, and after a journey of five miles by road, arrived in camp on the banks of the Suez Canal. We are three miles beyond Ismailia, which is a fairly large modern town. We had to get the horses picketed and fed. We got down in the open air about 1 am.

12TH I went on cooking today. Had a swim in the canal, but found it very dirty. They say we are about 20 miles from the fighting.

13TH Like the place very much. Am working hard, but it is a pleasure. After duty in the evening walked to Ismailia about three miles away. It is surprising, after having seen the dirt and squalor and insanitary places of the East, to journey up the desert, and find a town which is built on modern lines. Possibly Ismailia has sprung up with the canal, and an effort has been made to build the town on some definite plan with a view to the health of the people. The town, which will have about 30,000 inhabitants, (Arabs, English, Greeks, Syrians &c.) is approached by a fine avenue about three miles long. The roads are good, and the streets branch off at right angles from Rue Negrelli, which is the main street. The streets are wide, and usually lined with trees. There are plenty of good shops. The Arab Quarter, which is situated at the far end of the town is very fine, and we walked along a kind of bazaar thronging amongst hundreds of natives. The prices here are reasonable, but there is one drawback: while the Arabs deal in piastres, the chief shopkeepers use English money. It was quite annoying when presenting a 50 pt note to receive the change in English money, and as the two currencies do not fit exactly, there is a small loss on each transaction.

JANUARY 1916



Cooking duties.
Eddie is second
from left.

14TH Cooking all day. In the evening went over the Suez Canal ferry, and had a walk into the desert of Asia. [*On looking at map find it is not Asia.*] We have a few lines of trenches beyond the canal. We walked past these trenches, and into the desert about three miles. It was all sand, and we met nobody. However, on return, a party of Australians came out to see who we were, and told us we were in rather an unhealthy place. We were also halted at the trenches.

15TH Working hard all day. Had a walk down the avenue in the direction of the town.

16TH Nothing fresh today. Yesterday about 1,000 Rifle Brigade men came and camped opposite us. They are all old boys of 40 and upwards.

17TH Fairly cool day. Plenty of work at the cookhouse. Wrote letters in the evening.

18TH Having very fine weather. Nice cool days, and fresh cool nights.

19TH Received two parcels today.

20TH Quiet day today. I finished cooking today to go on signwriting. Am sorry, because grub is scarce, and money is so scarce.

JANUARY 1916

21ST Working in a big house all day. NA section arrived at dusk.

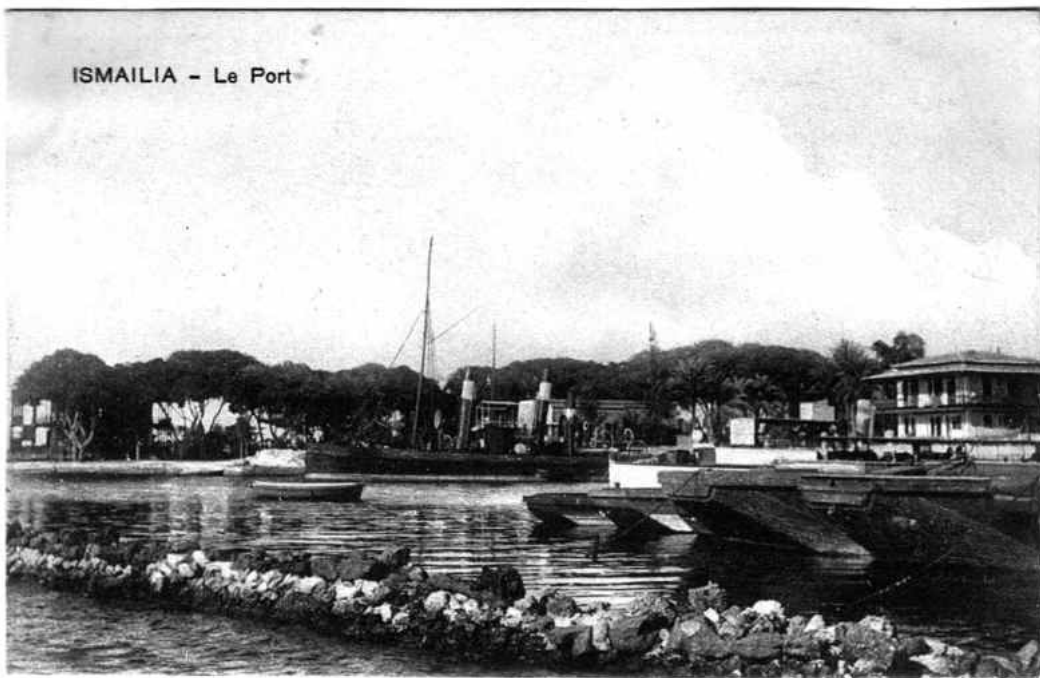
22ND Finished painting today. Have been working with two painters and gleaned quite a lot of hints from them.

23RD Sunday. Was working on fatigues at Ismailia station in morning. Had a bit of a chat with an Italian youth whose dad was the manager of the Egyptian State Telegraphs. He kindly gave me a ride on a camel. Am spending all my evenings writing letters and reading at present.

24TH Had a busy day. Took a pair of horses out in morning. Went on a 10 mile ride over the desert. It was fine when we cantered. In afternoon put up a telephone line. Grub is still very scarce, and we get very little bread. Am on picket tonight, looking after the horses.

25TH Cool night with showers, but slept well when off duty. Painting again today. Am working with a chap called Morrison of Linlithgow. He is a fine fellow. Today is the coldest we have ever had in Egypt.

26TH Painting some big 'speed limit' boards for the Provost Marshal. Am getting on fine with signwriting, and receiving many valuable hints from my companion. Received several letters dated November and December 10th. Had a few showers today.



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1916



27TH Very wet day accompanied by cold winds. Was pleased that I had not to work out of doors. Our food is not yet up to standard, but we can get plenty to eat, and that is the main thing.

28TH There are signs of pay. Hope it won't be long. Had plenty of rain today.

29TH Received pay – £2. Had a nice stroll round Ismailia in the evening, and bought a few stores.

30TH Commenced to pack up after breakfast, and moved to a camp nearer the town. I arrived about 4.30 pm with the last party. The camp is situated on the edge of the desert, partly under a large grove of palm trees, which is encircled by a moat. It is a kind of oasis. I think we shall be OK here.

31ST Very hot day. Spent all day putting camp in order. On picket at night.

FEBRUARY

1ST Had a fine day today, building a line across the desert. There was plenty of sunshine and a cool breeze.

2ND Drawing stores today for another line. There are some strong rumours about us going home.

FEBRUARY 1916

3RD Grand cool day. It is fine to be alive. Went across the desert in morning with a wagon to draw some wood from an evacuated camp. I think the camp was occupied by RFA a year ago, when the Turks crossed the Suez at Serapium. In the afternoon did some joinering.

4TH Quiet day. Did some joinering. Had a stroll round the town in evening. We have got two new men today, who have just come from England.

5TH On line guard all day.

6TH Sunday. Fine day. Had the afternoon off. Went for a walk round Ismailia in evening.

7TH Spent the morning doing some joinery work, and assisted with the erection of some poles in the afternoon.

8TH Spent all day greasing wagons.

9TH Had several nice rides. Nothing fresh today.

10TH Work consisted of exercising horses in morning, and putting up telephone lines in afternoon.

11TH On QM's fatigues all day. Went to the picture house in evening. We heard gunfire this morning at about 5.30 pm. Our troops were experimenting with Very Lights. It is said that the Turks are a day's march from us.

12TH Quiet day. Had afternoon off.

13TH Sunday. Had part of morning and part of afternoon off. We have had a good day today. Mrs Bray's gifts of cigs, tobacco and cake came to hand, also Col. Manifold's Christmas pudding.

14TH Quiet day. Received letters dated 1 February.

15TH Wet day. Had a walk round Ismailia in evening.

16TH Quiet day. Doing very little work except stables. Have bought a French book, and am going to try to learn the lingo. I cannot get the kind of book I should like, but shall do my best with what I have.

17TH Had a fine day today. We reeled in a cable line across the desert. It was a heavy job, with the sand driving in our faces.

FEBRUARY 1916



18TH Working amongst telegraphy stores at Ismailia station. Had a nice day. On picket all night.

19TH On same job today. Did not get the afternoon off.

20TH Sunday. Did very little work today. Had a nice time.

21ST Working on a line over the desert in morning, and assisted with a telephone line in afternoon. Finished reading *The Gate of Samaria* (by WJ Locke)

22ND Received orders about a big inspection parade which is to come off on Thursday. We are putting in a lot of overtime. I have had to clean my buttons for the first time since leaving England.

23RD There was a rehearsal parade today. Our officers have got the wind up. It would be humorous if we were not getting so much extra work. They are carting a lot of our kit away, and returning it after Murray [*General Sir Archibald Murray*] has been. We are having bully beef tomorrow, so that the General will not see any meat about. Most of my spare kit has gone into the cellar, i.e. buried in the sand under the tent.

24TH Up at 5 am to get ready. General Sir A Murray arrived about 9 am, and everything passed off very well. Inspections are all right, but when one came out to fight, and has seen a little, such demonstrations are not very acceptable. I should admire the Army better if they gave us a better chance to keep ourselves

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1916

clean, although it is well known that nobody who was on the peninsula came away very clean. There has been no opportunity to disinfect our clothes.

25TH Had a fine day putting up wires over desert country. Went to pictures in the evening.

26TH On the same job today. Am getting quite an expert at climbing tall telegraph poles. It is fine work, and I do not wish for a change.

27TH Had time off in morning and afternoon. Disposed of some correspondence in evening.

28TH Out all day putting wires on permanent poles. Enjoyed the work very much.

29TH Running cables all day. A large quantity of our stores have been handed over to L of C, so we may be moving soon.

MARCH

1ST Very hot day. We reeled in some cable in the morning. It is one of the roughest jobs I have ever struck. The route lay over very uneven desert, and the wagon was tossed about like a ship in a storm. In addition to the difficulties of hanging on, the sand was driving at us as if somebody was shovelling it on. There was a spice of excitement about the job, as one stood a good chance of being put out of mess. No doubt the Army will continue to use a cable cart for this kind of work until the regulations are altered, although it is altogether unsuitable. Oh for a business army! Had an easy afternoon. Two airline sections (N14 and N23) came to our camp today. I met a few old friends.

2ND Went on cooking for a week. The sand storms which we have heard about commenced today. The sand-laden wind was very unpleasant.

3RD The sand storm abated somewhat today. We have been promised 48- hour passes to Cairo, but the offer was reduced to 24 hours. Was on picket tonight.

4TH The wind changed today, and there was not so much sand blowing about. I drew £5 today ready for the trip to Cairo. We were issued with slouch hats today. They are suitable for this country, and not nearly so heavy as the helmets.

5TH Sunday. Quiet day. Went to pictures in the evening. My engineering pay has been increased to second rate from 25 February. I now get 2/10d a day.

6TH Took the cooking job on as a permanency. Got my pass for tomorrow for Cairo. Am going down to try the 8 pm train tonight. Left at 8.30 pm for Cairo.

MARCH 1916

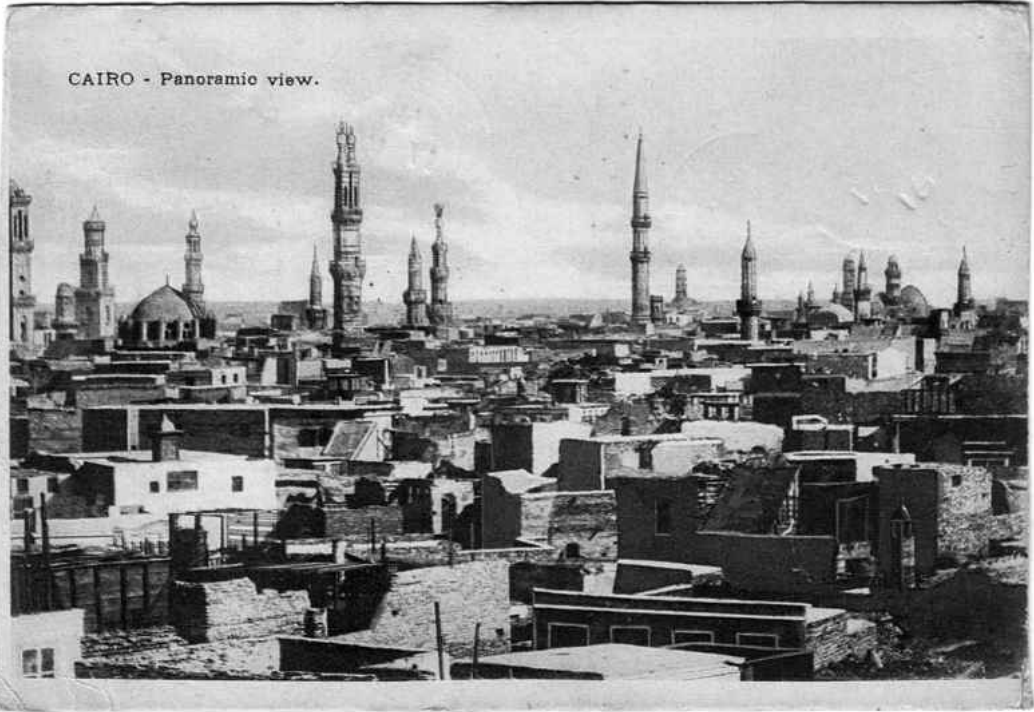
When we arrived about midnight, there were dozens of Arabs besieging us to show us to hotels. One chap put us onto a place.

7TH Slept in a bed all night. I cannot express what a treat it was to sleep in a bed. There are three of us on this trip: H Morris, Tom Ewing and myself. When we came down for breakfast, we found Moses waiting for us. He was the man who had directed us to the hotel. His fee was 10/- to show us around, so we gave him the bird. He was very persistent, and was only choked off with difficulty. We had drive round the city in a garry, and then got the car for the Pyramids. We took a guide at this point, but it would have been unnecessary had we known exactly where to go and what to see.

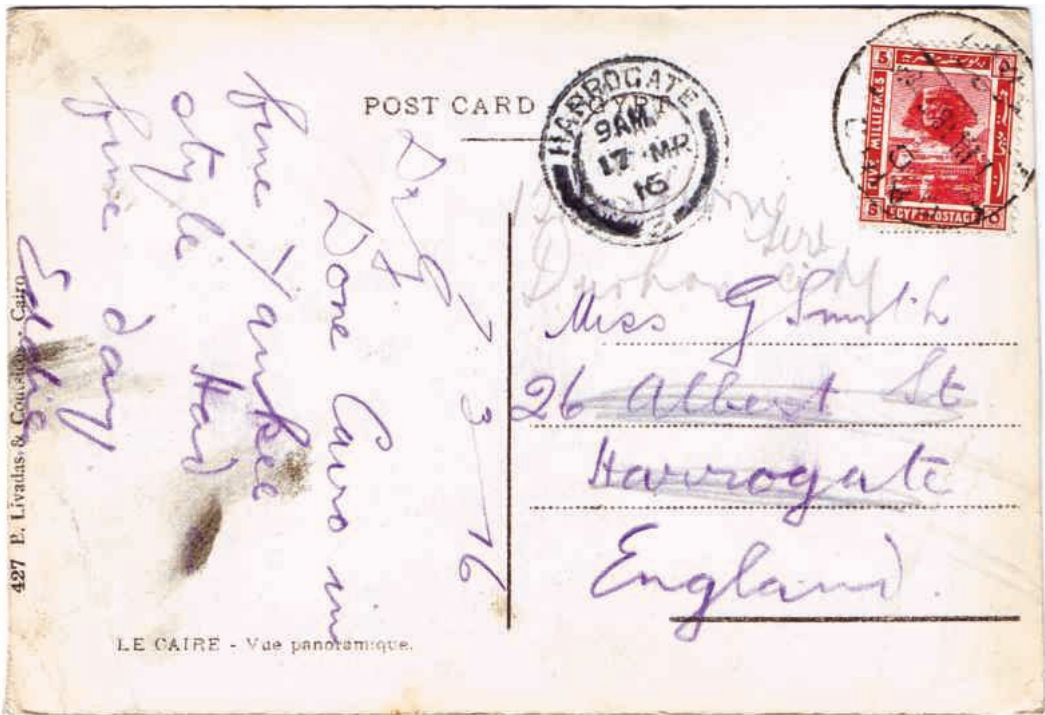
The journey by car was about four miles, and through cultivated country. The desert commenced at the Pyramids. We had a good look at the Pyramids, the Sphinx and the Tomb of Ramesses. There is a beauty and art about the Sphinx, but one could hardly say the same about the Pyramids. One can hardly imagine what labour they have entailed to build. It would take an hour to scale Cheops, which I think is the largest one. I had intended climbing to the top, but did not push the matter when I saw what a difficult task it would be. However the fatigue of going inside was quite enough. I do not remember perspiring so much before. We took off our boots at the entrance, and chartered a guide each. The first part of the journey was along a low tunnel, which gradually sloped to a depth of 20 metres. The tunnel then took a turn upwards, and continued for 30 or 40 yds. These tunnels culminate in huge chambers. The guide burned some magnesium ribbons to light the place up. My guide and I had very strong words about the ribbon. He was getting 1 /- for a few minutes work, and wanted 6d extra for the ribbon. These guides and showmen are a set of robbers, but I believe they are sanctioned by the Government, and in some places a guide is necessary. I bought some coins and a model of the Sphinx from a chap who was hanging about. We left the Pyramids about noon, and we were absolutely paid with the heat and fatigue.

We took the car back to the city and had lunch. We spent the afternoon visiting various places of interest in the city, such as the Citadel, the Mosque and the native bazaars. After tea we only had time to visit the PO. Our train left at 7.15 pm. It had been a grand day, and one to be remembered.

8TH Back to work again, and feeling quite contented. I made a bookcase for myself, so that I could have things handy. Yesterday I bought a shisha (hookah pipe). It is made of clay and cost 3 piastres. A fellow called Hassan is going to get a stem for me tomorrow, so I shall soon have the affair in working order. I would like to send one home, but don't think it would arrive intact. We received gifts of soap, toffee and writing pads from Leeds Flag Day Committee.



CAIRO - Panoramic view.



POST CARD

HARROGATE
 9 AM
 17-MP
 16



427 E. Livadas & Co., Ltd. - Cairo

Handwritten notes in purple ink:
 Done Cairo in
 style hand
 fine day
 fine Yankee
 style hand
 fine day

Handwritten address in purple ink:
 Mrs G Smith
 26 Albert St
 Harrogate
 England

LE CAIRE - Vue panoramique.

MARCH 1916

9TH We heard that Hassan has been locked up for stealing when he did not come in this morning. However he came in the afternoon and got his job back. He fitted up my pipe, and it smokes very well.

10TH Quiet day. I have some very interesting times talking to the Arabs. Somehow I cannot get hold of sufficient Arabic to carry on a conversation properly. However if I stay here a few years, I shall get to know the Arab. He has something very fine about him, and his better side is not appreciated by our men. It is a pity there are such a large number of them who live from hand to mouth. A barrel of beer is being sold each night in camp. The drink begins to speak about 9 pm and the camp is quite noisy.

11TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh.

12TH Sunday. Had a very busy morning getting dinner ready. Went for a swim in the afternoon. Spent the evening writing.

13TH Fine day. Went for swim in the afternoon. Finished reading *The Garden of Allah* (Robert Hichens). The book is mainly about the great Sahara Desert, and the writer has portrayed the mystery and grandeur of the desert in a very alluring manner. Perhaps it would appeal very much to anyone who had not seen a desert. The information about the wanderers of the desert is very interesting to anyone who knows the Arabs. The narrative is very fine. The way in which Androosky and Domini put religion before love is truly noble, although I do not exactly see eye to eye with them, not having much knowledge of the Roman Catholic faith. If I were here for pleasure, the book would almost tempt me to try a journey in the desert where I could feel 'That nobody but God and I knows what is in my heart'.

Hassan Achmed
and his family.



MARCH 1916

14TH Quiet day. Had a swim in the afternoon. Being able to go for a swim each day is one of the advantages of this job in the cookhouse. In the evening, went to the pictures. They were very good. Went round the bazaar, and had a smoke at a shisha in one of the cafes.

15TH Had a fairly busy day. In the morning lettered a board for the machine gun school. In afternoon went for a swim. At 4.30 pm, we went to a boxing contest. Richardson of our Company fought Flowers of ANZAC Sigs. Our man lost owing to a foul in the 6th round.

16TH Mail up, but I did not receive one from home. Went for a swim in the afternoon.

17TH Fine day. Nothing of importance happened. Went for a swim in the afternoon, and did about 500 yds. Hassan Achmed, our refuse man, brought his brother today, as he could speak English very well. I had an interesting conversation about the customs of the Arabs. Hassan has two wives, but is allowed four by law.

18TH Very windy day. Much sand drifting over the desert. Had a very rough morning with the smoke from cookhouse fires. Our chaps put down about eight miles of cable over the desert, using camels instead of horses. They had a rough day.

19TH Sunday. Quiet day. Had a walk round the Arab bazaar in evening.

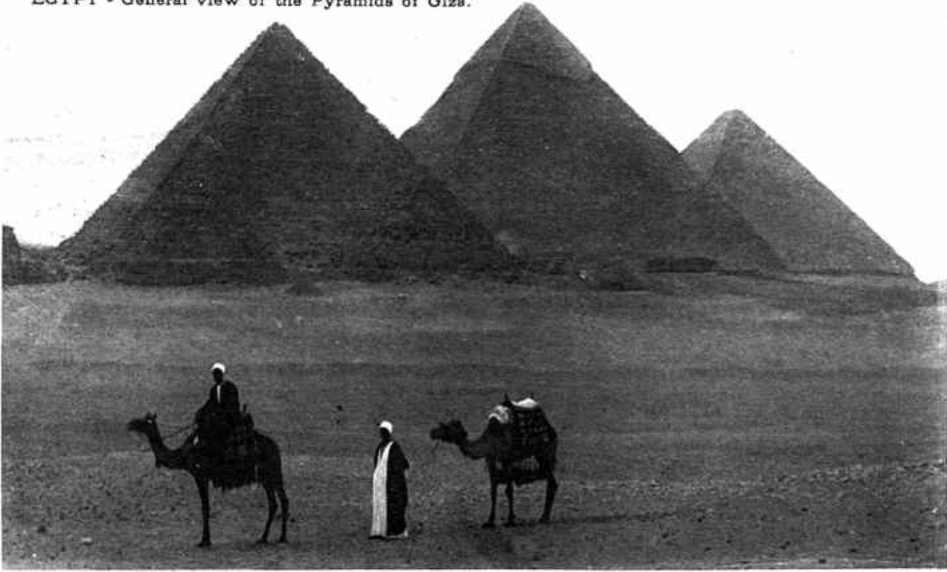
20TH Quiet day. Had a football match in evening.

21ST Had a swim in afternoon. Kilkenny who was invalided from the peninsula came to our camp today. He has been posted to NA section. There was another football match after tea. Received a heavy mail today.

22ND Had a fine day. There was bully beef for dinner, and it is what we call cook's holiday. When going to the pictures in the evening, saw the Prince of Wales. After leaving the pictures, had a walk round the bazaar, as we had two men to show round.

We first called to see Henry Lander, who sells jewellery in the street. He is an Arab, but speaks fine Scottish. Even Scotsmen are set up with him. We called at the tailor's, and had a chat, then on to the man who sells fezzes. We spent about half an hour at another shop buying a dish. The boss here has the most cunning eye that I have ever seen. He is a typical Arab merchant. We looked in at the door of an Arab boozier, and listened to the Arab fiddler playing his dirge. I enjoy these nights.

EGYPT - General view of the Pyramids of Giza.



POST CARD - EGYPT



127 B. Livadas & Coutisicos - Cairo

Erskine

K R

*Had a very
interesting &
enjoyable day at
Cairo*

7.3.16

*Misses Reid
Lyngarth
Starbeck
Harrogate
England*

EGYPTE
Vue générale des Pyramides de Guizah.

MARCH/APRIL 1916

23RD Quiet day. Spent evening reading and writing.

24TH Went for swim in afternoon. Sent £11 home.

25TH Had a busy morning. Bully beef has been issued for the past few days, so we made rissoles this morning. Went for a swim in afternoon.

26TH Had a busy day. Went for a swim in the afternoon and went to the pictures in the evening.

27TH We hear there has been a landing made at Bulair on the Peninsula. Had a swim in afternoon, and a walk round the Arab quarters in search of photographs with my friend. Spent evening writing.

28TH Went for a swim in afternoon. Had the pleasure of seeing Charlie Chaplin at pictures in evening.

29TH Very hot day. Had a very nice swim, and practised some life saving. It is rather a difficult thing to carry a man in the water, even though he keeps still. Met some Australians today, who have been having a rough time. A division of them were marched from Tel el Kebir to Ismailia, a distance of 30 miles across the desert. It is said that 17 men have died, and hundreds are in hospital. They followed the railway route nearly all the way, and could see almost empty trains passing. It is a disgraceful business, and I hope those responsible will be brought to account. I would gladly form one of a shooting party.

30TH Dull day. Had a heavy sand storm in morning. In afternoon was instructed to report to GHQ to do some signwriting. I am with my friend Morrison again.

31ST Working at GHQ again today. We are doing some speed limit signs, but there is not much work in the shop. Was supplied with a khaki drill suit today.

APRIL

1ST Worked at GHQ in morning. Did not go back in afternoon. Tried a swim instead.

2ND Sunday. Worked at GHQ in morning. In afternoon set off with Alf for the purpose of taking a photograph of Hassan Achmed's family. We were not successful. Got a nice picture of a beggar. Finished reading *The Gate of the Desert* by John Oxenham. It is a fine yarn, and holds one right through, but does not give much interesting information about the desert.

APRIL 1916

3RD Quiet day. Went for swim in afternoon, and spent the evening writing.

4TH Quiet day. Fairly cool. Had a nice swim. Went to a concert at St Johns in the Wilderness Chapel in the evening.

5TH Quiet day. Section 25 Air Line has got orders for a move somewhere. In afternoon swam out to Monitor *Sir Thomas Picton* which is in Lake Timsah about a mile from the shore.

6TH Went with Alf and Hassan in afternoon for purpose of photographing Hassan's family. We took a snap of Hassan and his friends, and one of Hassan and his children. Mrs Hassan would not come out.

7TH Went to GHQ in afternoon. Lettering some motor cycles. Had a look at the job and came away ready to start tomorrow.

8TH Painting at GHQ today. Went for a swim in afternoon. Played goal in a football match after tea. I let three go through.

9TH Working at GHQ in morning. Finished in the afternoon.

10TH Went back on cooking. Quiet day.

11TH Am 26 today, and don't feel any older. Went to the pictures in the evening and saw Charlie Chaplin. A wedding feast was in progress in the Arab Quarter. The dinner was being served when we arrived, and later on a concert was to follow. We were not able to stay for the concert, which commenced at 10 pm. The place was decorated with flags, bunting, etc

12TH Quiet day. Went for a swim in afternoon. Finished reading *The Crimes of England* by GK Chesterton. It is a fine work on the present war, but rather advanced for me. At night a sand and rain storm came on. We were glad to keep the tent over us.

13TH Dull morning, and we could see a storm in the distance. It broke on us about noon, and it was not long before everything was covered with sand. I set off on a bike to GHQ to fetch some brushes. When I got on the main road, which is flat, the wind sent me along at about 15 miles per hour. It was a rough ride back.

14TH Had some very heavy rain. It appears that these wind and rain storms will continue for 50 days. They are known as the *Khamseen* [Arabic word for 50]. Made a bed today, and moved into another tent where TPS and Alf Smith live.



APRIL 1916

16TH The camp was moved a few feet to the right, so we had a busy morning. These apparently useless changes usually take place when the chaps are due to a little rest. I am now in a tent with five others. Went for a swim in afternoon. At night I had a walk around the town. There was a fire in the Arab Quarter, but it was only a little bedding that had caught fire. There was a kind of free fight amongst the Arabs, but the fracas was soon quelled by the police.

17TH Quiet day. Went for a swim after tea.

18TH Another quiet day, with a fairly strong wind. Went to see a football match after tea.

19TH Quiet day. Went to see pictures in evening.

20TH Quiet day. Went for swim in afternoon, and found the Army had put public swimming pier out of bounds. We tried several places which were also forbidden. We managed a swim in the evening.

21ST Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report. Did not go for a swim because some of the boys were late for dinner.

22ND Had a busy morning. Found a fairly decent swimming place, and had a dip in the afternoon. It is the melon (*shemumma*) feast (*fantasia*) of the Arabs, commencing tomorrow. I had a walk in the Arab quarters at night to see if there was anything doing. We met Hassan who would act as a guide. There was nothing fresh. We saw the decorations for a funeral feast, which were very like those for a wedding. Hassan informed us 'one man finish'. Have bought another Arabic book so as to enable me to widen my vocabulary. I can speak better than anyone in the camp, but am not yet satisfied.

23RD Had a very busy morning getting dinner ready. In afternoon had a walk up Arab town, but was informed that the Sham el Nessim commenced tomorrow. We took a photo of Ibrahim Monsad who is a typical Arab merchant. Wrote letters at night. Several of our chaps are going for a five-day trip on the desert. The preparations are enough to break a fellow's heart. We are well out of it.

24TH Got up early to get breakfast ready for the party. Went for a swim after breakfast, and enjoyed it very much. In afternoon had a walk round the town to see the *fantasia*. Most of the natives were gaily dressed, and the children were in new costumes. They were being treated to rides round the town in carts and trips on the canal. The *fantasia* was almost like the Whitsuntide treat at home.

Tent mates.
Eddie front left
with brother, Alf,
front right.

APRIL 1916

25TH Had a lot of painting to do. Went for a swim in the afternoon. Had to go to GHQ at 7 pm to do some painting.

26TH Very hot day. Had a swim in the afternoon. Just finished reading *Alton Locke* by Charles Kingsley. It is fine book dealing with the emancipation of labour. It clearly shows that many of the classes are working for the uplifting of the working man.

27TH Quiet day. Had a swim in afternoon.

28TH Cool day. I swam across the Suez Canal in morning with a cable which had to be taken across. Painted numbers on some transport motors. In afternoon finished reading a detective tale: *The Hollow Needle* by Maurice le Blanc. I do not care for the way in which le Blanc borrows a character from Conan Doyle, and gives him the name of 'Holmlock Shears'. It is evident that he means it for Sherlock Holmes, as he portrays him as a second rate detective. This practice of borrowing a character from another writer is somewhat shady.

29TH Nice cool day. Went to the pictures in the evening and had a walk round the Arab Quarter.

30TH Sunday. Spent a quiet day. Spent afternoon signwriting on the transport motors. Reading and writing in the evening.



MAY 1916

MAY

1ST Woke up with a very bad head, accompanied by sickness. Must have had a touch of fever or sunstroke. Stayed in bed all day in a half-dazed condition. Everybody did their best for me.

2ND Feeling much better, so went on with my work. Am glad I have not had to go to hospital. Had a swim in the afternoon.

3RD Had a swim in the afternoon, and then went to see a jumping and, trotting competition. There was only trotting when I was there. It seemed a bit tame. Perhaps these galas keep up the morale of the Army, but it is possible to have too much of this kind of thing. It is hardly seemly that we should be making merry, just after the fall of Kut. Not only have the Turks gained a victory in Mesopotamia, they have surprised us in the Canal Zone. Their base or railhead is 50 miles from our front, but a party of them have managed to creep up and smash some yeomanry camps near Kantara. The Gloucestershires, Warwickshires and Worcesters are the ones who have suffered. Our patrols have been out and buried 60 men. The Turks before leaving paid attention to our wounded, and left them with rations for three days. The Bedouins have been busy robbing the wounded and dead.

4TH Nothing fresh today. Went to the pictures in the evening, and had a walk round Arab town.

5TH Went to GHQ to do some painting. Was working with Jock Morrison.

6TH Quiet day painting at GHQ. Went up Arab Quarter to get Alf's watch. It has been seized by somebody for debt.

7TH Cooking today. Had a swim in afternoon. Got paid £5 today. Bought a Parsee vase for JWS. [*His brother Jackie.*] It was a fine piece of work.

8TH Working at GHQ all day. Had a swim after tea.

9TH Finished working at GHQ. Had a swim in afternoon, and went to the pictures in the evening.

10TH Quiet day. Had a swim after tea.

11TH Quiet day. Fairly hot. Had a swim after tea.

12TH Very hot day. Nothing fresh to report.



MAY 1916

13TH Exceedingly hot day. We were dripping all the morning. After dinner was cleared, I went down to the lake, and floated in the water for about an hour. It was like a warm bath, unfortunately I started drinking the water to quench my thirst. It is a silly thing to do, because one is never satisfied. I dare not think what I have spent in lemonades and ice cream. I have decided to abstain from water in future.

14TH Sunday. Signwriting all day. It was very hot again in the forenoon. No one who is not here can have any idea of the heat. The water in the taps becomes so hot that we can hardly bear our hands in it.

15TH Quiet day. Damned hot again. Went swimming after tea.

16TH Very hot day. Said to have been 120 in the shade. Had a very long swim after tea. Finished reading *God and my Neighbour* by Robert Blatchford. I must read it at some later date. His arguments seem conclusive.

17TH Had a hot day again. Nothing fresh happened.

18TH Much cooler today. In afternoon had a motor ride to Arab town, and went to the west end of Lake Timsah for Alf to take a photo. Had a look round an Arab garden. The gardener made us quite at home, and we had a feast of apricots from the trees. The town is looking fine. The trees have got their new leaves. The gardens are full of bright fresh green, and many of the large trees are full of blossoms. Orange, red, purple and heliotrope are the chief colours.

19TH Fine cool day. We were hungry all day, and wanted very little to drink. A Greek friend of ours, who keeps a cafe has been telling us of his experiences. He was one of the five survivors of a transport that was torpedoed during the bombardment of Smyrna last year. He saved his life by swimming to *HMS Swiftsure*.

20TH Quiet day, nothing to report.

21ST Sunday. Quiet day. Went for a swim in evening.

22ND Fine cool day. Had a short walk over the desert after tea, and a look round a camel camp, where about 2,000 camels live.

23RD Quiet day. Went to pictures in evening. We are having very cool nights *dil wakti* (now).

24TH Quiet day, fairly cool. Went swimming after tea.

MAY/JUNE 1916

25TH Nothing new to report.

26TH Fairly cool day. In view of the approaching cholera season, restrictions have been put on the sale of uncooked vegetables and fruit. They have to be washed in permanganated water before they are sold. Mineral waters, unless made under supervision, are prohibited. We have been instructed to send in all blankets above one. At present one is insufficient, so am keeping only three. Had a swim in evening. The water was fairly rough.

27TH Fairly warm day. Had a walk round the town in evening. Finished reading *Aylwin* by Theodore Watts Dunton. It is a fine book dealing with Gypsy life and superstitions. The remarkable part of the story concerns the passing of a dead man's curse from one person to another. It is possible for scientists to pass mental disorders, such as hysteria, from one person to another, while it does not seem possible for anyone to be affected by a dead man's curse. Still, few of us would like to do anything that would bring a curse on us.

28TH Sunday. Fairly warm day. We were served out with double tents, which will afford us a little more protection from the sun. Had a fine swim in evening.

29TH Very hot day. I bought an Ensignette Vest Pocket Camera, and hope to take a few views as soon as I get some films. We have suffered a loss today in the section: Jacko, the monkey, has been claimed by the man who bought him. This chap has been through hospital, and is now in another section at Port Said. All the boys feel heartbroken. I had a fine swim in evening.

30TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh.

31ST Fairly warm day. The camp has been fitted with electric light. It looks as though we are here for the duration.

JUNE

1ST Have completed my first film of photos. They are now with the chemist to be developed. Had a walk in evening through camel camp, past Moslem cemetery. We also went past some mud houses inhabited by Sudanese. Nearby was an Arab camp. The tents were made of sacks. Called in at the YMCA for some refreshment. Have got to lesson 12 in *Hugo's French*. It is becoming difficult, but I am going to stick to it as long as I have the opportunity.

2ND A few of us were photographed in Arab costume today. Had a fine ride in evening on a horse across the desert. Finished reading *A Knight on Wheels* by Ian Hay. Very breezy yarn.

JUNE 1916



Alf Smith dressed as an Arab.

3RD Two chaps of our section are down from the desert. They are having a rough time. I was picked to represent our section on a Canteen Committee. They have been selling beer for three months, and made about £40. They should have about £90, but as the thing has not been run on business lines, it does not seem possible to find the money. I have had very little to do with the canteen, but I was able to put in a few suggestions regarding the disposal of the money on extra food.

4TH Had a very nasty sand storm after dinner. Printed my first film and was fairly well satisfied. The men had a very stormy meeting concerning the beer money which has gone west. Went for a swim in evening.

5TH Quiet day. Exceedingly hot during day.

6TH Fairly decent day. Had a swim in evening.

7TH Had a walk round Ismailia in quest of some photo studies. In evening we heard of death of Lord Kitchener. [*A popular military hero who was appointed War Minister on the outbreak of the War. His face and pointing finger feature in the most famous recruiting poster in history. The volunteer force he raised became known as Kitchener's Army. He was lost at sea on 5 June 1916 when the cruiser Hampshire struck a mine and was sunk.*] Finished reading *The Marriage of Loti* by Pierre Loti. The yarn did not appeal to me.

8TH We hear that we are to be granted seven days' at a rest camp at Alex. Quiet day, nothing fresh to report.

JUNE 1916

9TH Received a mail today. Nothing fresh to report.

10TH Nothing fresh to report. Attended a meeting of the Canteen Committee. Everything going on satisfactorily.

11TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh.

12TH We hear that the holiday leave does not apply to us. Drew £6 today in case we get the holiday. Went to pictures in evening.

13TH Very hot day. Two of our men came down from the desert today. They look dead beat. Went to GHQ swimming pool in evening, and had swim across the canal.

14TH Very hot day. Received a good mail. Spent the afternoon printing photos. In evening had an interview with a chap about some French lessons. We fixed up with a youngster who knows about five languages, and we are going to him three times weekly.

15TH Very hot day. Had our first French lesson in the evening. The boy seems about 15 years old, and he has a wonderful knowledge of French, English, Italian, Greek and Arabic. He reads and writes Arabic, and this is no small achievement, as Arabic is the second hardest language to write. He has a fine grasp of grammar, and if we are here for some time, there is no reason why we should not learn to read and speak French under his tuition.

16TH Very warm day. Had a trip round the town in a motor in afternoon. Went for a swim in evening.

17TH In afternoon went to Military Sports. The chief feature was the exhibition given by the Mysore Lancers in musical and trick riding. At 9.30 pm there was an open air concert, which finished about 11.15 pm. It was fine in the cool of the evening. There were some good singers.

50 PI Q/26 084824; Q/15 087670; Q/23 045228; Q/25 071485; Q/4 062732; 1£E, R/21 017482 R/9 084761 [*As a precaution against theft, Eddie here recorded the registered numbers of the banknotes he held.*]

18TH Very warm day. Nothing fresh to report. My friend Alf has had £7 10s. stolen. He takes it like a sport, but it is a very regrettable affair.

19TH Our section men returned from the desert. In the evening I attended a meeting of the Canteen Committee; everything is going well now. Leave to Alexandria will start shortly.



ALEXANDRIA -
Cherif Pacha Street.

POST CARD - EGYPT



On Active See

Miss Madge Higgins,
 Lyngarth,
 Forest Lane,
 Starbeck,
 Harrogate.
 England.

Best study.

Having a fine

holiday here. Weather

O.K.

Love

Sadie

M. C. [unclear]

80 B. LIVADAS & OUTRIGGS - CAIRO

ALEXANDRIE - Rue Cherif Pacha.



ALEXANDRIA - Mahmoudieh Canal.


POST CARD - EGYPT

80 R. LIVADAS & COUTSIGOS - CAIRO

ALEXANDRIE - Rue Cherif Pacha.

*OK.
Love
Sadie*

*It ruddy.
Having a fine
holiday here. Weather*

on Active Sea

*Miss Midge Higgins,
Lyngarth,
Forest Lane,
Starbeck,
Harrogate.
England.*

M. C. Walker

JUNE 1916

20TH Commenced cooking in morning, but after breakfast was sent to Army Railway Station Office to take up operating duty. It is a quiet job with about 30 messages daily. Three of us will take turn on the following duties 8 am to 1 pm, 1 pm to 6 pm, 6 pm to 9.30 pm and 9.30 pm to 8 am. Our meals will be somewhat disorganised, but we shall have to put up with that. Had a French lesson in evening. Worked 9.30 pm till 8 am. Got a little sleep but was disturbed with some messages.

21ST Had a swim in afternoon. Worked 6 pm to 9.30 pm. There are some very well educated Gypos at the station, and they seem quite different to the ones we usually meet in camp.

22ND Had a French lesson in morning. Very hot day. Life is like one long Turkish bath.

23RD Enjoying the work at the Station. Am on all night tonight. There was a very hot wind today. Went for a swim after tea.

24TH Had a good night. Went for a French lesson in afternoon. The young Egyptians who do telegraph boys' work at the Station are very well educated. They generally know a few languages. The 11th. Division passed through here on their way to France. They travel in open trucks. I was supplying one lot with water, and afterwards discovered they were 9th West Yorkshires.

25TH Received no letters in the bag today. Had a swim in morning. Worked 1 pm to 6 pm at the station.

26TH Worked 8 am to 1 pm and 9.30 pm to 8 am 27th. Nothing fresh to report.

27TH Worked 6 pm to 9.30 pm. Nothing new to report.

28TH Worked 1 pm to 6 pm. Am doing a lot at French just now. Hope I shall be able to stay here long enough to master it.

29TH Having very hot weather. Hear we are going to Alex next Tuesday. Finished reading *Shirley* by Charlotte Brontë. It is a fine book, but not exactly my style.

30TH Quiet day. The month of Ramadan commences with the new moon. During this period the Moslems do not taste food or drink between sunrise and sunset. There was a procession today, the object of which was to find the new moon. Several trades were exhibited on wagons in a similar manner to our trades processions. The whole thing was a rabble.

JULY 1916

JULY

1ST Taken off telegraphs to paint some motors. Didn't do much work today.

2ND Was looking round all day for paint etc. On stables in afternoon. Weather still very hot.

3RD Had a fairly busy day. Signwriting motors in morning. Went for a French lesson in afternoon, and for a swim in evening. Received a fine parcel from Madge.

4TH Some more mails up today. Had a French lesson in afternoon. Went for a swim in evening.

5TH Notes R/9 084761 £1; Q/18 002590 PT50; Q/23 045228 PT50; R/19 082935 £1; Q/5 090868 PT50; Q/25 071485 PT50. Received pay for leave tomorrow.

6TH Paraded 9.15 am to catch 10.30 am train for Change of Air Camp. The train was full up, so we went by ordinary at 1.55 pm. Arrived at Sidi Gaber Station and went by tram to Sidi Bishr. We then had to walk two miles to camp. I had plenty of kit and was fairly paid before we arrived.

7TH Had a look round the camp, also a swim. The camp is absolutely a model. Everything seems to have been done for our happiness. The camp is divided into sections, and each section possesses its set of recreation rooms, cafes etc. Pianos are very plentiful. The cookhouses are absolutely clean, but they are not models because they do not provide very good meals. We do not mind this because we can buy food all over the place at reasonable prices. In the afternoon had a good walk round the native bazaar and took a few snaps. Had tea and dinner in town, then went to the Alhambra to see an amateur performance of *School for Scandal*. It was fine, and finished about 11 pm. Our camp is seven miles from the city, so it was after midnight when we arrived home.

8TH Woke about 8.30 am so had a breakfast at one of the tea rooms. Had a nice dip in the sea. The water seems very clear and fresh after being used to Lake Timsah. Had to wait about an hour for a car to town. Went to Jardin Nouzha in afternoon. It is a beautiful place and has a small zoo. In evening attended an open air music hall. We heard songs in English, French and Italian. Arrived home about midnight.

9TH Sea fairly rough so we had to go to a different place to bathe. The swimming is very good. In afternoon visited Pompey's Pillar and the catacombs.

JULY 1916

They were very interesting. Had a long walk through a native district. In evening went to the Casino, which is a kind of music hall.

10TH Had a swim in morning. Visited Cleopatra Camp in afternoon, and went afterwards to Luna Park open air cinema. Arrived in camp about 10 pm.

11TH Went round the lake near Cleopatra for some photos in afternoon. Spent evening about town, and went to American Kursaal at 9.30 pm to see a review: *Smile Up!* It is the best show I have seen out here. Arrived home about 1 am.

12TH Had a look round the town in afternoon. In evening went to Casino to hear Royal Welsh Fusiliers band. Arrived home about 1 am.

13TH Had a rest in camp all day. Left by train for Ismailia about 9 am. Had a very uncomfortable journey – it was impossible to sleep.

14TH Arrived home about 5 am. I felt done up, so had a rest all day.

15TH Very hot day. Feeling very tired, so did not do much work. We have had a very strenuous holiday. Printed some photos this morning. They are coming out fairly well, but my camera lets in light somewhere.

16TH Quiet day. Went to hospital to see the dentist this morning, but he was out. Am working on the lines for a few days.

17TH Had a tooth out this morning. I am feeling very run down, and a bit weary. The food is very poor at present, and we are always hungry.

'Change of Air'
holiday camp.



JULY 1916

18TH Quiet day. Feeling a little better. Have got three horses all to myself now. I like looking after them, and I have to ride them to water about a mile three times each day.

19TH Another hot day. In evening took one of my horses for a ride to Halfway House about seven miles across the desert. It was a fine ride, and a canter over the sand is fine sport.

20TH Quiet day. Plenty of work. We hear that there are 10,000 Turks advancing on Katia. All men returned from Rest Camp today. Am having to look after the canteen money at present, and it takes up a great deal of my spare time.

21ST Doing some joinering work in morning. In afternoon had to take a sack of harness to Hill 40 which is beyond Kantara. The train journey to Kantara was interesting, we have plenty of troops along the canal, and in places the other side has been flooded for miles. Kantara is full of troops at the far side of the canal. I was not able to get a train on the light railway to Hill 40, so I set off on the four mile journey on the road. I got a lift in a wagon for a mile, but there was nothing else going up, so I got a Hindu to carry the sack of harness on a camel. It was very decent of him, and he would not accept backsheesh. The desert is one weary waste of dirty sand. There are hills and



ALEXANDRIA - Pompey Column and Sphinx.



POST CARD - EGYPT

Ben Active Service

Mrs Madge
Lyngarth.
Tobest Lane,
Dunston Beck
Harrogate
England.

13 July 1916

Mrs Madge.
Going back today.
Had a very fine
holiday. Will write
later.
Love
Eddie

ALEXANDRIA
Colonne de Pompée et Sphinx.

02

JULY 1916

valleys, and in parts a little vegetation. There are also salt lakes and marshes. I delivered my harness, and after tea one of the boys provided me with a horse to return to Kantara. I arrived home about 8.30 pm, after an interesting afternoon. The Turks are said to be at Ogratina. I saw the Marquis of Tullibardine at Hill 40.

22ND Quiet day, and no news of the Turks. Finished reading *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* by Holmes. It is fine, but I do not like it better than *The Autocrat and the Professor*.

23RD Quiet day. Received a mail. I am doing some joinering work. There is no news of fighting up the desert, but a lot of troops are going that way.

24TH We hear that 300 prisoners have come down. There is very little in the papers about any fighting. Was on picket at night.

25TH Hot day. Nothing fresh to report. Went for a French lesson in evening.

26TH In afternoon went to interview Mr Louch who is an inspector of the Egyptian State Telegraph, with a view to ascertaining whether there is a chance of a job after the war. It appears there is practically no chance. The telegraphs are ruled by a Col. Liddell whose motto appears to be 'Egypt for the Egyptians'. There are only six Englishmen in the State Telegraphs. Three hold Army appointments, and the other three are inspectors, and deal with outdoor work. Mr Louch said that life out here was somewhat disappointing. Egypt was a poor place for the wife and children, and he also said that the holiday in England, which was granted every three years took all spare money. He is contemplating getting a job in English PO after the war. Went for a ride over the desert in the evening, saw the gun fired at 7 pm, which indicates to the Mohammedans that the sun has set, and they may eat.

27TH Commenced working in QM's stores with FRS [*his cousin FR Smith*] who is acting QM. The job is OK, and there is no one to bother us. Went for a French lesson in the evening. Tasted some fine green figs and some mangoes. The mangoes are considered to be one of the best fruits grown here.

28TH Nothing new to report. I like my new work.

29TH Had a fairly busy day with stores. Am also spending a lot of valuable time at Canteen Committee meetings. There is a lot of money being made, and it needs watching very carefully.

30TH Sunday quiet day. Was not able to attend service in the morning, owing to duties. Finished reading *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* by Anatole France.

JULY/AUGUST 1916

It is a fine book. We are confined to camp for four days owing to the native feasts following Ramadan.

3^{1ST} We are not supposed to go to town, but I got a trip up the native quarters in a ration motor. The Gyppos are enjoying themselves. The children are riding about in wagons, and there are swing boats and a big wheel made in a primitive fashion. I got a few potatoes. It seems a wise precaution to keep the troops away from the people, because they get somewhat excited and insolent with the festivities.

AUGUST

1ST Quiet day. Walked to GHQ in evening to see Jack Morrison.

2ND QM came back from hospital, but I have not got the sack yet. Had a quiet day and did very little work.

3RD Had couple of hostile aircraft over, and they dropped bombs within a mile or two of us. We had a fine view of them. Our anti-aircraft guns did not get anywhere near with their shrapnel. I left the stores with a rush this morning, because we have got orders to be ready to move at 24 hours' notice, and our wagons need packing. As far as rumour goes, we are going to form a new company. All our section are going, and the sergeant major of this camp and a few others. We are looking forward to the change.

4TH Packing up all day. As far as I can ascertain, we are going to form a divisional headquarters. Very quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

5TH There has been a lot of fighting today and I think we have taken some 3,000 prisoners. I was on QM fatigue all day, and when finished at 5 pm, was instructed to be ready at 8 pm to go to Kantara. Five of us set off at 9.24 pm by train for operating duty at Kantara. We arrived OK, and got a good rest.

6TH Up about 6.30 am. We were instructed to go to Mohamdiya, which is at the end of the railway, 47 km from Kantara. We had a fine journey in open trucks, and passed through various places of interest, including Hills 40 and 70, Romani and Gilban Loop. When we arrived there, we were not required, and returned on the same train. The desert is a dreary sand waste, covered with scrub and of course there are no habitations of any kind. We did not see or hear any fighting. No doubt the troops are well in front of our railway, which is a very valuable asset. Places above mentioned are camps. The boys on the desert must be having a rough time. They would leave their tents to see the train in and one could tell by their faces that life out there was no holiday. The sun seems to have burnt all the cheerfulness out of them. I saw a few hundred

AUGUST 1916

prisoners this morning. The Turks do not seem as well put on as those we took off the Peninsula. There was a machine gun section of Germans amongst them, also a German Major. Went for a swim in the Suez Canal in evening. Feel very well satisfied with today's unique experiences.

7TH Feel I am living once again now that I am on the war path. Working in Kantara signal office all morning, and after dinner got orders to pack up for Romani. We went to the station at 3.30 pm, and had to wait till 8 pm for a train owing to some wounded coming in. I enjoyed the open air ride across the desert in the moonlight. Arrived about 11.30 pm, and went on night duty straight away. It is a nice new office, made of wood and rush matting. They have been shelled recently by the Turks, and also had a few explosives from hostile aircraft. I think I shall like the place.

8TH Finished work at 8 am, and had some breakfast. I applied for a tent, but there was no chance for us, although we had brought three with us from Kantara. We made a fairly decent temporary shelter of blankets and I had a good sleep despite the heat and flies, and on the whole it is a nice place. There is a small grove of palm trees about half a mile away. This is an oasis. We are able to get about two pints of water a day for drinking, and I think there is some well water which we can get for washing.

9TH Working on a relief, and getting regular hours. I like the place very much. Had a walk round the oasis this morning. It is not dull here by any means. There are thousands of camels passing backwards and forwards, and there are plenty of trains in. I think our men have been engaged with the Turks again and have taken some prisoners. One batch of prisoners includes a woman. The Turks are retiring though. Was mistaken for an officer tonight.

10TH No news of any more captured. It is said that in our engagement of the 4th, the Turks had lost 5,000 either killed, wounded or prisoners. The food is very good for active conditions, and I like being here. Paid a visit to wireless friends in evening.

11TH Been on duty all night. Had a sleep in morning. There seems to be very little doing on the front, and our Army is resting on its laurels of 4th August. An aeroplane dropped bombs on Kilo 47 this morning. Finished reading *The Autocrat at the Breakfast Table*. It is a fine book, and I enjoyed it very much.

12TH Quiet day. I am of opinion that the Turks are retiring. I set out this morning for a swim at Mohamdiya. However the train was so long in starting that I could not have got back in time for duty. We have been drawing water rations for washing from an Egyptian well, but today it had run dry. I went to another well which I had spotted, and it was real indecent water,

AUGUST 1916



Eddie camped
in dugout.

both brackish and salty. I had the stickiest wash I have ever known. Afterwards I procured some decent water from a railway engine. We get two pints of drinking water a day. With a little care it is sufficient. I was inoculated today against cholera. Tonight we hear the Turks have retired and all our troops are coming in.

13TH Quiet day. Was working as a camel driver for an hour and a half in the afternoon. Had a walk round the desert in evening. The Turks seem to have cleared off, and no doubt we shall go soon. Wrote some letters this afternoon.

14TH We are fairly busy at office with troops coming in etc. In afternoon I walked to Mohamdiya for a swim; it is about four miles away. The dip was OK. I am sorry to say that cholera, which first broke out amongst the Turkish prisoners, is becoming rife. There has been a few cases at Kilo 47, but there is no doubt that everything is being done to stamp it out. No cases are to be evacuated over the canal.

AUGUST 1916

15TH Quiet day. The work is going steady now. Bennett came up with a heavy mail for us. It is really fine to get a mail, and I feel quite happy and contented.

16TH Quiet day. With regard to the Romani battle, I have heard that the Turks almost surrounded Romani, and put up a good fight. No doubt they have cleared off mainly owing to cholera. At Oghratina, the German RAMC have left notices regarding cholera, and also indicated the places where some cholera cases were buried.

17TH Quiet day. All leave has been stopped in our section. In morning, went to Mohamdiya for a swim. The sea was fine, and the walk of six kilos each way is just decent.

18TH Quiet day. Went to Mohamdiya for a swim. Was able to take the train both ways. The office work is going fairly steady. We are isolated, no doubt owing to the cholera. No officer or man is allowed to cross the canal until the plague has been stamped out. There are only a few cases, and they have them well in hand.

19TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report. Have finished reading *An Englishman Looks at the World* by HG Wells. I enjoyed his reasoning very much.

20TH Went for a swim in morning, by train both ways. Have contracted a nasty cold on night duty.

21ST Work falling off at the office. Went for a swim in morning. Am seeing the desert through dull spectacles just now. It is rotten to be seedy in the field. Grub is falling off, and there is very little to be got from the canteens, unless anyone is prepared to wait several hours before being served.

22ND Am feeling much better. Today the full account of the operations out here has been published. It is as follows:

Enemy's strength estimated at – 18,000.

Prisoners captured by us – 3,930 (including 49 officers and 25 Germans)

Killed buried by us – 1,251.

Wounded and killed dealt with by the enemy estimated at 4,000.

Total casualties to the enemy – about 9,000.

Our own losses amount to – killed 202, wounded 882, missing 46.

Total 1,130.

Captures include:

1 Krupp gun

4 75 Mountain Battery Guns with 400 rounds of ammunition all complete

9 German machine guns

AUGUST 1916

30 boxes belt ammunition
 7 large shields
 2 small shields
 2,300 rifles and one million rounds of ammunition
 100 mules
 500 camels
 2 complete field hospitals

Was inoculated 2nd time for cholera this evening.

23RD Hear we are going to Kantara, as the work has dropped off here. Went for a swim this morning. I think it is Tina Bay where we have our dip. Had a good walk round the countryside and saw most of the defences. Took a few photos. Am feeling very seedy again. Don't know if I am going to die, but I feel like it.

24TH Packed up this morning and went to Kantara by train. It was a bumpy ride. We had to take with us one GS wagon and 10 drums of cable. Received a mail just as we left Romani. Arrived in Kantara and pitched our tent at the 9th Corps Signals Camp. It is a poor camping ground, both hard and dusty. The 9th Corps are not a very excellent lot to be with. Had a swim in the canal before sunset, then settled down to a quiet read.

25TH Quiet day. Had a swim before breakfast, also one at sunset. Did one hour's work in the Signal Office at noon. Finished reading *The Necromancers* by Father Robert Hugh Benson. It is about spiritualism, and the moral of the book appears to be that it should be left alone.

26TH Quiet day. Very little work to do. The quarantine has been extended to the end of the month. We cannot get any money here, and are having to live on Army rations which, although fairly good, give us the pip. The food is not altogether suitable for the climate.

27TH Sunday. Quiet day. Had two swims in the Suez. Went on church parade, but was sent back for duty in the office. But when I arrived was not required. Did not do any work all day. Troubled very much with mosquitos after sunset.

28TH Hear that the quarantine has been lifted, so we may get back to Ismailia. Did about two hours' work today. Went to see some Turkish prisoners after tea. There were also some Bedouins. The Turks look very ragged, and have no standard uniform. There was an old Bedouin said to be 90. His wife looks older.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1916

29TH Quiet day. Did no work. We received a mail, so we are very happy. We hear that Romania has come in. [*Romania had declared war on 27 August 1916 as an ally of Britain*]

30TH Did no work today. Getting tired of having no work to do.

31ST Nothing much doing today. Spent a lot of time in the canal. Received orders to return to our section tomorrow.

SEPTEMBER

1ST Left at 9.18 am by train. Glad to get home again. Spent rest of day washing clothes and putting things in order.

2ND Quiet day. Went on cooking. Things have altered a little, but I think I shall like the job. I have been without money for a long time now. We hope to get paid soon.

3RD Received a mail, also a parcel from home. Have had a very busy day in the cookhouse. Most of the gear and utensils belonging to our section seem to have been lost, and the work cannot be carried on so conveniently as before. In evening went for a nice ride on a horse. It is very nice to have a stable at ones disposal.

4TH Another quiet day. We do not get too much sunshine nowadays, and the heat is not excessive. I went for a swim in Lake Timsah in the moonlight. The dates are almost ripe. I got a few nice ones in the spinney.

5TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report. Had a swim in evening.

6TH Another quiet day. Am working fairly long hours, but that is no hardship when the weather is so decent. Went gathering dates in evening.

7TH Received pay: 30/-. Not before time. In evening went to a concert given by the 19th Rifle Brigade at St John's in the Wilderness.

8TH Nothing new to report. Went out with the Romani party in evening. We had a good feed, and visited the pictures.

9TH We hear the leave to Alex has recommenced, so we may be tripping off once more after all the men have had a turn. I had a walk down town in evening to get a French lesson, but could not find our young man. While we have been away, many shops have sprung up, and it is possible to buy almost anything in town.

SEPTEMBER 1916

10TH Had a very busy day in the cookhouse. My partner is strange to the job, and although very willing, he does not seem to get into the work. Cooks are born, not made.

11TH Had a fairly easy day. General Manifold inspected us this morning. Everything passed off well.

13TH Nothing to report. Had a heavy baking day.

14TH Nothing to report. Went to pictures in evening.

15TH Quiet day. Those of us who have had two years' service are going to receive a GC [*Good Conduct*] stripe and 1 d a day extra, and there is going to be a bounty for men who enlisted prior to the Derby Scheme. [*A scheme introduced in October 1915 to register all British men between the ages of 18 and 41, and arrange their subsequent call up for service when required. It was organised by the Earl of Derby.*]

16TH Some of our men went to holiday camp at Alexandria today. They are the ones who were recalled owing to the attack on the canal. We have got a piano in the canteen now. There was a big sing-song last night. I did not go because it would be a waste of time when I have so much reading to do.

17TH Quiet day. Nothing to report.

18TH Received a mail today. Nothing fresh to report. Had a walk round the town in evening. Leave to Alex is being granted. I am going to try for a trip to Luxor.

19TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report. Tomorrow we commence cooking on a different system. Instead of cooking for sections separately, we are going to cook *en bloc* for the camp. It will be easier for us.

20TH Today is Garibaldi Day, and the Italians were holding a festival. [*Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–82) was the hero of Italian independence and unity.*]

A concert was held, and various stalls were being run on behalf of the Allies' Red Cross Societies. In one room there was a roulette table. I had a try with 10 pt, and although I played for half an hour, I lost it in the end. I do not know anyone who won anything. It is a fascinating game. All the Canal officers seemed to be present. There are some fine men amongst the civilians, but the women do not seem to survive in this climate. They are a contrast to the men.

21ST I am still cooking, but not working so hard. Our new system does away

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1916

with a lot of work. I procured some small palm trees today, and have planted them at the tent door. I hope the OC will not interfere with my gardening, as it adds a charm to our home.

22ND Quiet day. Printed some photos in the afternoon and evening.

23RD Another quiet day. Received pay of 16/-. The party arrived from Alex. They have had a nice week. Alf found a dog at the station, so we brought him home tonight. He has settled down OK.

24TH Sunday. Quiet day. Most of the cooks got drunk after dinner. Our dog is making himself at home. When I came in at night, he was fast asleep on my bed. Several NCOs and men in our camp have got Serbian decorations.

25TH Had a nice easy day. Did plenty of reading etc. Received a mail.

26TH Have got a slight touch of fever, but think a few quinine will put me right. Went to the pictures in the evening.

27TH Quiet day. Nothing to report.

28TH We hear the GHQ Sigs. are going to Cairo. No doubt we shall move somewhere. It will be a change after being here so long.

29TH Quiet day. Twenty four men went to Ballah this morning, but we seem to be making the camp snug for winter, so I doubt whether we are moving.

30TH Nothing to report. Went to cinema in evening.

OCTOBER

1ST Working hard all day cooking and baking. Several N14 men stayed in our camp overnight. They are building permanent lines about 70 kilos up the desert from Kantara. It is a rough job, but they are going to Alex Holiday Camp for a week.

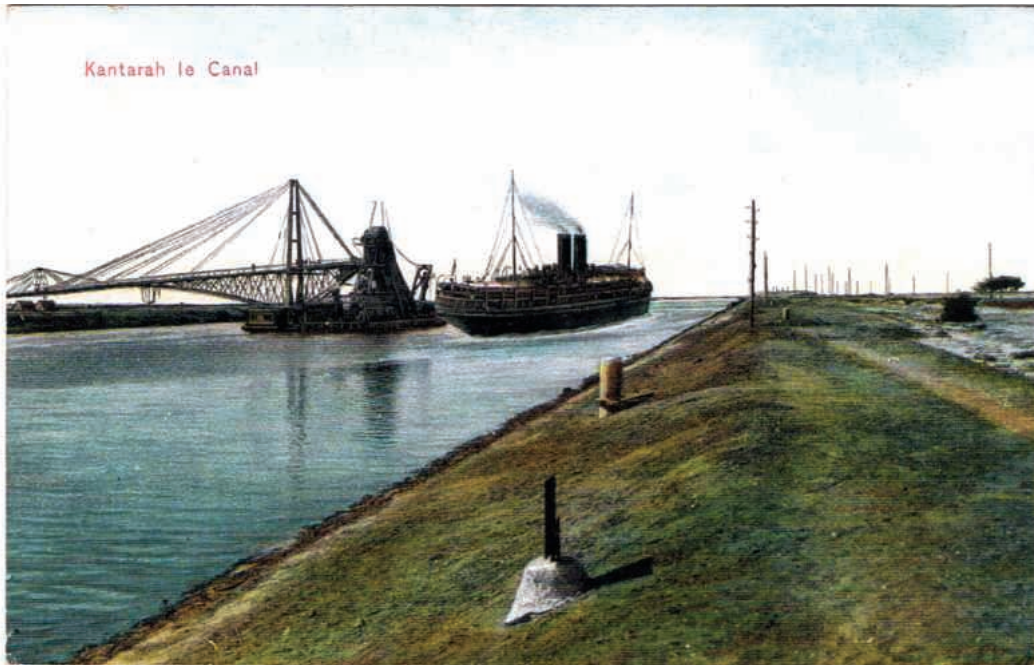
2ND Nothing to report. Went to the pictures in the evening.

3RD Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

4TH Fairly cool day.

5TH Went to pictures in evening.

OCTOBER 1916



6TH Spent all my spare time reading etc.

Swingbridge,
Suez Canal.

7TH A *fantasia* is being held for the next few days. It is to celebrate the finish of the pilgrimage. At night I got a midnight pass, and visited a native circus. There were all kinds of Arabs and Egyptians present. The affair was a poor imitation of a circus at home. There was rope walking, tumbling, trapeze work, also a clown who made jokes. A pony and a donkey were the only performing animals. An Arab beauty gave us an exhibition of dancing. She appears to be under the impression that she was graceful and beautiful. Perhaps the natives were charmed with her, but to me she appeared repulsive and ugly.

8TH Spent all morning on a kit inspection, so had a heavy day's work. Went to the pictures in the evening. Finished reading *Lorna Doone* by RD Blackmore. It is fine yarn of the West Country.

9TH Quiet day. Received a mail. Nothing fresh to report.

10TH Nothing to report.

11TH Quiet day. Took the dog for a walk round the desert in the evening. He seemed surprised to find the world so big.

12TH Quiet day. Went for a walk over the desert in the evening. I am sorry to see in orders that no dogs are allowed in camps. Ours may have to go.

OCTOBER 1916

13TH There were storms in camp today. An inspection was made, and the verdict appears to be that things were running to seed. There were more men on special jobs than were available for ordinary duties. All this has to be altered. Two of us have been taken out of the cookhouse, which leaves only three men to cook for 90. In the evening I took our dog to the station telegraph office, so that he can live there for a while.

14TH Working on the lines today. At night, our dog turned up in camp. He had found his way from the station.

15TH On stable guard all day, and picket all night. Finished reading *The Beloved Vagabond* by WJ Locke. The writer has a fine knowledge of France and its language.

16TH Had a busy day painting a new stable. Nothing fresh to report.

17TH Quiet day. Had a game at football in the evening. I am getting too old to run. [*He was 26.*] Our side won. Worked at station telegraph office in evening.

18TH Worked at station in afternoon and visited open air cinema in the evening.

19TH Quiet day. Nothing to report. We are packing up ready for a big inspection on Saturday.

20TH Getting stores ready for inspection all day. Received word that it is postponed until Monday. Had a game of football in the evening. Our side lost 2:0. Had a walk round town in the evening.

21ST They shot all the dogs in camp this morning. I was very sorry to lose mine. There was a concert in the evening in the canteen.

22ND Finished reading *Literature and Dogma* by Matthew Arnold. Have not come to any conclusions about it. The work is too advanced for me. I must read it again *après la guerre*. Received a letter from Topham in France. They are having a rough time *dil waktu*.

23RD Quiet day. We are still busy cleaning up for the inspection which is to come off tomorrow.

24TH The inspection came off all right, and I think we passed satisfactorily. I am on some painting work today.

25TH I was painting again today, and managed to wedge some photography in with it. There is nothing new to report.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1916

26TH Went to see a chap about some French lessons today. NA section are going to Mohamdiya tomorrow. I have been put on cooking again.

27TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

28TH Went to GHQ to do some painting. It was a nice change. Finished reading *Harvest Home* by EN Lucas. He is a fine writer, and I enjoyed it very much.

29TH Worked at GHQ in the morning. Took a holiday in the afternoon.

30TH Worked at GHQ today. Nothing fresh to report.

31ST Finished working at GHQ. Had a swim in the Suez in the morning.

NOVEMBER

1ST Quiet day. Worked on lines today. On picket at night.

2ND Received pay today. Went to pictures in evening. Enjoyed night out very much.

3RD Had a fairly busy day, helping to clip horses.

4TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report. I hear that there is an attack on El Arish today. I am going up the desert tomorrow.

5TH Came up to Kantara by motor. We are three: Collingbourne, Frankie and myself. We have to lay a 10 mile cable up the railway route. Kantara looks a little cleaner, but otherwise there are few changes

6TH Had a nice day today. Laid a cable from Kantara nine kilos up the railway line. Finished about 2 pm. Had a swim in the canal.



Home-made comforts inside Eddie's tent.

NOVEMBER 1916

7TH Had quiet day. Didn't do any work. Had a swim in the canal. Went to the YMCA concert in the evening. There was some fine talent, and I enjoyed it very much.

8TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report. Had no work to do.

9TH No work today. Some of our boys brought an Electric Light wagon up today. Section No. 12 came here from Cairo tonight. I met some old Biggleswade boys.

10TH Out working all day. Reeled in some wire, and put some more out. We went about 14 kilos up the desert. Reached home at 6 pm. Reeled in a lot of copper wire, about 15 kilos. Had a swim in the Suez. Finished reading *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo. Enjoyed it very much.

12TH Sunday. Holiday today. Nothing fresh to report.

13TH Quiet day. No work to do. Went to a concert at YMCA given by the 'How D'ye Dos'. It was very fine.

14TH Had a busy day. Packing up and laying cable as far as Gilban Loop, (17K up the line). We bivouacked there for the night.

15TH On waking I think this is the dirtiest place I have ever seen. It seems to be a dried up marsh. There is a strong wind which blows the dirty dust about. There are lots of flies. Also the ground is full of holes which contain either rats or mice. By the number of feet marks in the sand, there must have been a fine dance round us last night. I worked about camp all day. We joined the 24th Airline, and will be camped with them for a few days. Walked over to the salt lakes for a swim. The ground was very spongy, and there were cakes of salt an inch thick. It was not deep enough for swimming, but I had a nice brine bath.

16TH Reeling in Z3 all day. Am enjoying the life very much. Got a mail up.

17TH Cleaning up the wagon in the morning. Went for a swim in the salt lake.

18TH Reeled up and put out cable as far as Pelusium. I stayed there all night. I slept in a fine roomy ammunition dugout. We dropped across some homely Lancashire lads, also some railway conscripts who have only been out from England a fortnight.

19TH Did no cable work today, as the horses were tired. I acted as cook for the party. There is a ruined town about five miles away, known as old

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1916

Pelusium. It is mentioned in Roman history. We had no time to visit the place. Received a mail at tea time.

20TH I travelled back to Gilban by train with our luggage, whilst the others laid some Z9. There is a heavy wind on, and it is a dusty dirty day. Had a rest during the remainder of the day.

21ST Reeled in 6 kilos of Z3, then went back to Kantara by road. We have done about 180 kilos since leaving Kantara. I have enjoyed the trip. Had a swim in the canal, and I needed it, because we had a dusty ride.

22ND Had to stand by today. I was able to do a bit of washing and get cleaned up.

23RD Standing by again. Received a mail. The 53rd Division marched past today.

24TH Still standing by. Nothing fresh to report.

25TH Got a move today to Swingbridge Camp. It is on the west bank of the canal, about one mile north of Kantara. Frankie and I are to work at a small office (code RFA), which is the centre of some Australian and Camel Camps. We shall ration with the Dinkums. At present the place is staffed by two buzzer pioneers (one, a Lt. Col., is in charge). We expect to have a telephone switchboard shortly. I made a bed at Kantara this morning, so I brought it with me in the cart.

26TH This is a fine place. Very little work to do, and nobody to bother us. Had a swim in the canal.

27TH Had a nice day. There are some fine colonials here. The office is going to be extended during the next few weeks.

28TH Quiet day. Am still enjoying the job, which is the best I have ever struck. Went to Kantara for pay in the evening.

29TH Quiet day. Finished reading *Vanity Fair*. It is very fine. Wrote home, but have not yet received a mail.

30TH Finished reading *Tommy and Co.* by Jerome. It's a decent little book, but not so funny as most of his.

DECEMBER

1ST Spent half day at Ismailia. Saw all the boys. Had a walk round with Alf.

DECEMBER 1916

2ND Quiet day. Nothing to report.

3RD Sunday. Joined up with Alf Smith and H Morris at Kantara, and we went to Port Said for a half day. It is a decent little place with some very good shops. It resembles Alex but is much smaller. There is a fine monument of Hugh de Lesseps at the entrance to the canal. Am pleased I have seen the place, but there is a sameness about these towns.

4TH I wired up the new hut, and removed the instruments. It makes a fine office.

5TH Quiet day. We have to cook for ourselves in future owing to one of our chaps falling out with the Australians. I went to the Mysore to repair a trench phone. Partook of chapatis and tea with them. Won two large water cholties for the Egyptian Labour Stores.

6TH A party of our section came up today to build telephone lines. Nothing else to report.

7TH Quiet day. We were treated to some Maori songs by the New Zealand boys. I visited some Indians today, and had a look round their camp.

8TH Quiet day. Was invited to go and try my luck in New Zealand by a chap who had 26,000 acres. I would not mind going if I was younger.

9TH Quiet day. Visited a friend of ours at the Mysore Lancers. They cooked a meal for us, which consisted of tea, chapatis and fish. The whole lot was made on a primus stove. I was favourably impressed with Hindu food and cooking.

10TH Quiet day. We expect a big mail tonight.

11TH Got paid £11 today. Am going to buy something at Ismailia to send to Blighty. Received two fine cakes yesterday. Am going to hang on to them until Christmas.

12TH Was fairly busy on telegraphs today. Nothing fresh to report. Finished reading *In Tune with the Infinite* by Trine. It is a very helpful book.

13TH Spent all today making a fishing trap which I am going to put in the canal. Hear that the Germans have offered us peace.

14TH Went to Ismailia to buy some presents at the Hindu shop. Things are very dear here. The bill came to 965 piastres. Had a walk round the town with Alf.

DECEMBER 1916

15TH It was my turn to cook. Got a letter mail in.

16TH Another quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

17TH We lost our lance corporal today. He has had too much rope and hung himself. He was suffering from a swelled head, and was bound to get fired in time.

18TH Quiet day. I contracted a severe cold.

19TH Had to stay in bed all day. Felt much better towards evening.

20TH Feeling better today. Nothing fresh to report. Received a mail.

21ST Went to Ismailia in afternoon. Saw a football match for the Egyptian cup (GHQ Signals v Port Said ASC). GHQ won 5:2. Some Greek soldiers travelled in train with me. Had a look round Ismailia with Alf. I wish we could get him up to SBC office. Finished reading *The Face of Clay* by HA Vachell. Not much in my style.

22ND Cannot get properly rid of my cold. It is miserable being off colour. Finished reading *The Heart of a Russian* by MJ Lermontov. It is nothing to write home about. However I have to read what I can get these days.

23RD Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report. Had a walk round the Camel Hospital.

24TH Quiet day. An Arab brought me a large lizard, which I had asked him for previously. It was about 2 ft long. I had it skinned, and am curing it tomorrow.

25TH We have had a very nice Xmas. The Australians gave us Xmas Billie Cans containing Xmas gifts, also Xmas parcels from Queensland. We had a good dinner. In the evening, a few friends came down to the office, and we had a little party.

26TH A fairly quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

27TH Went to Kantara for pay in morning. Paid a visit to Syed Hussain of the Mysores. I am gleaning quite a lot of information concerning India.

28TH Quiet day, but fairly busy in the office. Finished reading *Idols* by WJ Locke. Very decent.

DECEMBER 1916

29TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report. Received a parcel and letter mail.

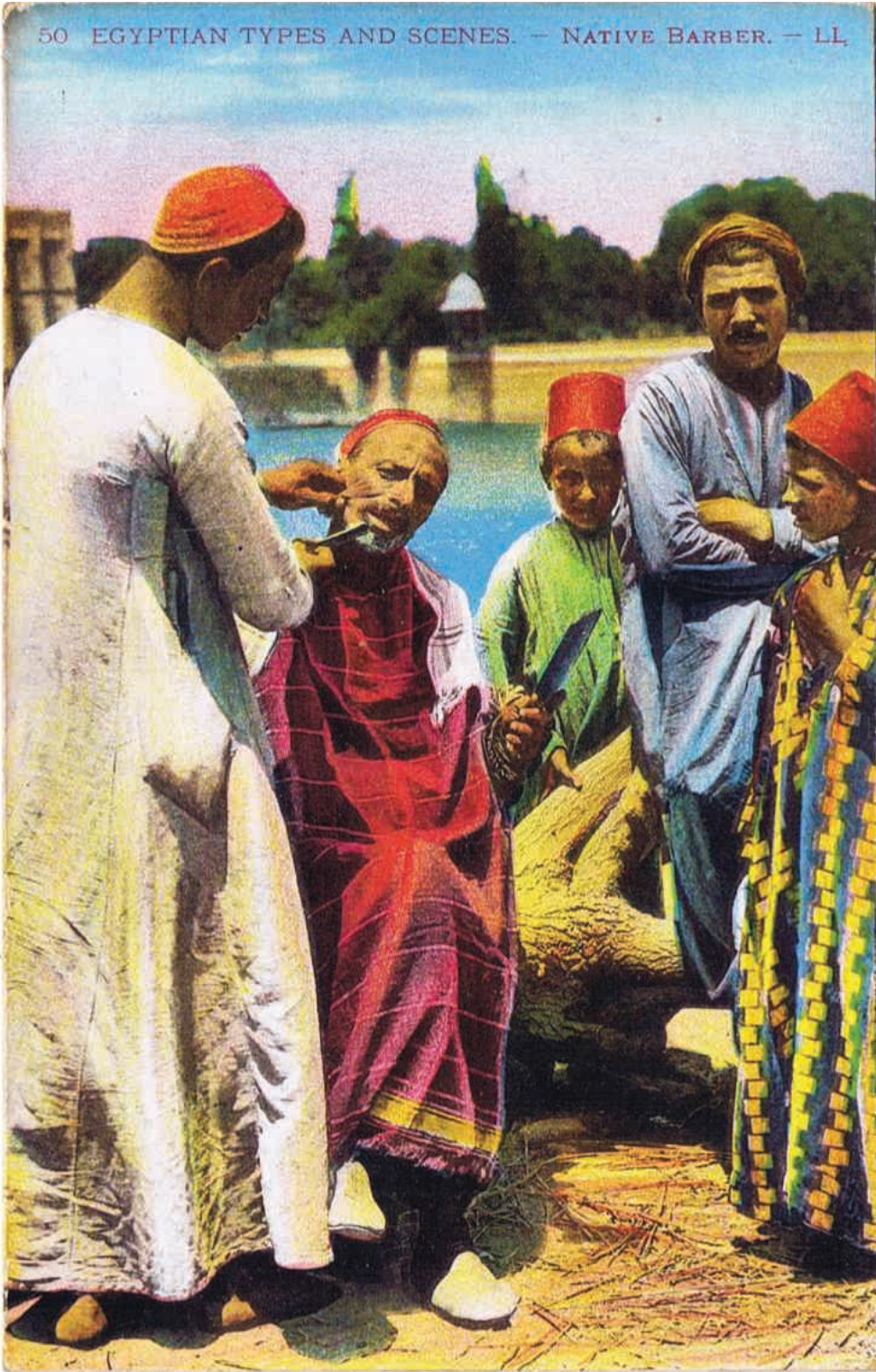
30TH Nothing fresh to report.

31ST Last year I spent New Year's Eve with Scottish Horse. This year we gave a little party. We had plenty of cakes etc, also plenty of drink. Some of the boys came up from Kantara, and we had a few NZ and Australian friends in. There were about 22 of us. We watched the old year out etc, and had a really good time. Alf came up from Ismailia and stayed overnight. He enjoyed himself very much.

Friends at El Arish,
and cooks.



50 EGYPTIAN TYPES AND SCENES. — NATIVE BARBER. — LL.



1917

JANUARY

1ST Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

2ND Another quiet day. Very wet and cold.

3RD Spent all day making the hut wind and rain proof. In order that we need not burn a light all day, I have made a window with some bottles. It looks fine, and nobody would guess it was made with whiskey bottles. Very heavy rain today.

4TH Went to Ismailia in the afternoon. Had a trip to pictures and a look around the town.

5TH Quiet day. Wrote all my letters.

6TH We seem to have got things straight with the office now. It is a fine peaceful existence here, and I am really contented.

7TH Nothing fresh today. Syed Hussain brought us some confectionery which his sister had sent from India. I ate some in order to be polite, but it did not appeal to me. The things were stickily sweet and contained oil of some kind.

8TH Had good walk today. Spent the afternoon pottering round a salt marsh. We have a camel orderly from one of the Camel corps. I indulge in a ride occasionally.

9TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

10TH Went to Kantara in evening for pay. It is said that L of C are taking over Kantara.

JANUARY 1917

11TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh.

12TH The troops had a very successful time at Rafa. Taken about 1,600 prisoners.

13TH Got orders to leave here. The new draft are taking over as far as Kantara. I am very sorry. Had a half day in Ismailia today.

14TH No wagon came for us today, so we are still hanging on. Had a walk to Kantara today to make sure of seeing Eddie Barnes. He looks well and likes the place. I think we are moving to Ismailia shortly.

15TH They did not send a wagon for us, so I hung on all day.

16TH Still no word to go, although the other men have taken over. This easy life suits me OK. Spent evening with Syed Hussain and his uncle.

17TH Still no orders. Spent evening with Hoenig NZMR. [*New Zealand Mounted Rifles.*]

18TH Went fishing in the afternoon, but no luck. Finished reading *Lavengro* by Borrow, also *Bug-Jargal* written in French by Victor Hugo. *Lavengro* is a fine work, but I should have preferred a little more philology.

On the canal.



JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1917

19TH Did some airline work this morning. Moved a telephone at Mysore Lancers. They do not seem to be sending for us. Frankie went to Ismailia today. It appears our section is destined for El Arish, but owing to the new draft being unable to take over, we cannot leave just yet.

20TH Quiet day. No further orders.

21ST Went to Ismailia for half day. It was a nice change.

22ND Quiet day. Did plenty of studying and reading. Had a walk to Kantara at night.

23RD Went to Kantara for pay. The new draft are not doing very well, and there has been a conference about them at Cairo. Nothing fresh to report.

24TH Still hanging on. Did all my washing this morning.

25TH Had a very fine afternoon fishing. We came across shoals of fish in a salt marsh. We had to catch them with our hands. After an hour's work we had 20 of decent size.

26TH Quiet day. Had a ride to Kantara on a Field Squadron remount. Saw some armoured cars shipped across the canal for desert work.

27TH Nothing fresh today. Was able to have a good read at French. Am making fine progress, but it is no easy task. Tommy Thompson of New Zealand came down from El Arish today, and gave a good account of the place.

28TH Alf came over for the day. Nothing new to report.

29TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report. Wrote home.

30TH The two chaps who took over from us have got orders for Mohamidiya, so Frankie and I have had to take over again.

31ST Don't take very kindly to work, but I suppose a fellow must do a little now and again.

FEBRUARY

1ST Saw 54th Division pass our camp on the way to relieve the 42nd up the desert. It is heartbreaking to see them plodding along with pained faces. Occasionally one sees a fit man, but the majority are crooked with over-exertion. People who have not seen them can hardly understand what they are going

FEBRUARY 1917

through. The hardest pill to swallow is that they are marching at the side of a railway. Have had a telescope given but it was said to be out of order. Have looked up a lot of instructions, and find there is a convex lens missing. That is why it won't work. One part of the scope makes a good microscope which has revealed some unpleasant things. I discovered that the ordinary house fly is frequently covered with hundreds of very small lice. I thought flies were a pest, but it is horrid to think that they may deposit these smaller insects on our hands and faces. It is however gratifying to know that a fly is not free from worries, even while he is worrying us. Big fleas have little fleas &c. &c.

2ND Quiet day. Went to Ismailia at 7 pm to stay the night.

3RD Got up at 4.30 am, (quite a change for me) and left by 6 am train for Cairo with Alf. Our Company was playing semi-final of Egyptian Cup. I am not very interested in football, so did not go to the match. A pass to Cairo is too valuable to waste in that way. Our team won 3:2.

Our first call was at ANZAC Hostel to book beds. It is a place run by the YMCA. The prices are cheap, and the meals suitable for a white man. We felt we had a home during our few hours stay. I only had 30/- to see right through, and it was necessary to do without those luxuries called guides. There were thousands of them enquiring how they could help us. Looking back on the short stay, I should say we have been pestered by about 2,000 guides. Most of them were choked off by means of saying *Mush owze huggar* (I want nothing) but I offered to boot two dozen of them. In fact there was one persistent fellow who followed us half way up Cheops Pyramid, who I had to offer to throw down before he would leave us. I have been asked if I wanted my boots cleaned about 5,000 times. I had about 50,000 walking sticks offered to me, and also thousands of other articles ranging from jewellery to motor cars. Our first trip was by garry to the Muski Bazaar, where one sees all the craftsmen working on brass and jewellery. There is a lot of faking and the Arab is not a first class craftsman like the Hindus. One saw how precious stones were made. The method appears to be quite unique: coloured glass from old medicine bottles was the substance employed. The stones were polished up on a revolving wheel. The scent bazaar was very fine, but I would not like to work there. Some very primitive lathes were employed for wood turning, but their method of working is too difficult to explain on paper. They turn out fine work. We next had a look at the Sultan Hassan Mosque. The interior is very fine. One of the chief features being some metal doors inlaid with gold and silver, worth several thousand pounds. We climbed to the top of the minaret, and the view was splendid: Cairo laid at our feet. It was one mass of flat-topped houses dotted with mosques. We took some fine snaps. The mosque across the way was closed to visitors. However we were able to peep through the railings and get a peep at its grandeur. Walked round

FEBRUARY 1917

the citadel. There is nothing much to do at night, so we had a walk round the town and went to some pictures. Slept in a fine bed at night. It was one of the chief pleasures of the trip.

4TH Up at about 7 pm, and had a hot bath. The programme today was pyramids, zoo and Helloauan. Walked over Kasr el Nil bridge. It boasts of four fine bronze lions. We took some snaps of the Nile, took the train for the zoo. The guards were fine; so were the animals, amongst which were lions, crocodiles, panthers, hippopotami, rhinoceros, monkeys, zebras, giraffes and hundreds of others. Next by car to the pyramids. Had a nice conversation with an educated Egyptian while on the car. Was troubled with thousands of guides and camel men as soon as we left the car. Went to sphinx and took a few snaps, also down in the sphinx temple, which is very fine, with its tall columns and alabaster pavements. Passed on to Cheops Pyramid, the big one. After scattering a few more guides, we climbed up by ourselves. It was a stiff pull, because the stones are about two feet high. The top is flat and about 20 ft square. I thought I had got rid of the guides for once, but no. There were some on the top, ready to tell our fortune or make us a cup of tea. We availed ourselves of the latter offer. We took some fine snaps of the dead city and Mena Village. We also took each other's photos to produce as circumstantial evidence that we had made the ascent. Came down and back to town. We went by express train to Bulac Station, but the train for Helloauan had left. However, we took a train for Old Cairo and saw an ancient mosque, also the place on the Nile where Moses was supposed to have been found in the bulrushes. We were not able to find the spot on our own, so employed a guide at 2 piastres. Went back to the hostel, and had a nice dinner, then back by train to Ismailia. Stayed night at spinney.

5TH Arrived at Swingbridge about noon. Nothing fresh to report.

6TH Got a glass for my telescope. It goes fine now. Went to Kantara for pay in evening.

7TH Quiet day. Fairly busy owing to movement in camp. Wrote some letters.

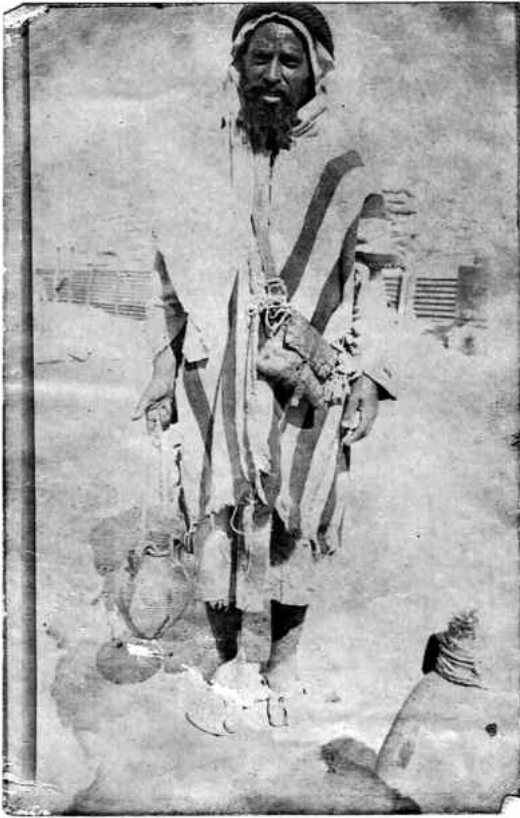
8TH Fairly busy day owing to 42nd Divisional Artillery. Went fishing in afternoon and caught 42.

9TH Quiet day. Nothing to report.

11TH Sunday. Went to Ismailia in afternoon. They expect to go to El Arish during the week.

12TH Spent all day printing Cairo films. They have come out very fine.

FEBRUARY 1917



Water carrier (one of Eddie's photos).

13TH Frankie went to Ismailia today. The section is going to El Arish on Thursday. We have not yet received any orders.

14TH Mac called to see us in morning, and said we should be going to El Arish shortly. In afternoon a motor came for us and took us to Kantara.

15TH Hung about at Kantara all day. The section arrived at night with many tons of gear.

16TH Went to station with wagons in morning, but no room for us in the train. Had to come back with sleeping gear and stay the night at Kantara.

17TH Got up at 3 am and after a lot of heavy work, such as loading onto trucks many tons of kit, and four cable and two electric light wagons, we departed at 6 am. The journey of 152 km was completed at 2 pm. We managed some grub on the way. The scenery was the usual desert, all sand and plenty of scrub. There were many lakes and marshes, and also gypsum lakes. On arrival, we had some very hard work unloading, and it was dusk before we had a drink of tea, and got the tents fixed up. The camp is situated about

FEBRUARY 1917

a mile from the station in a hod of palm trees on the sea beach. I was dog tired, and got down as soon as possible.

18TH Running telephone wire all day for Army Headquarters. Staff will be arriving tomorrow and we shall commence the office. On picket all night.

19TH Working all day, fitting up telephone wires at GHQ. Made a bed at night out of a piece of wood I managed to win at headquarters. Wood is scarce here, and I am the first to scrounge a piece.

20TH Went down to the station to do some work. Had a look at El Arish from a hilltop. There is a tomb near our camp which is said to contain the remains of King Nebuchadnezzar, and two of the Apostles once preached in the palm hod where we are camped. An order has come out that no beds will be allowed in tents. I think mine will have to be scrapped.

21ST Quiet day. Contracted a terrible cold. Went to bed early and had some rum.

22ND Hostile aircraft over at breakfast time, but they were unable to hit him.



Eddie drinking tea
on top of the great
pyramid of
Cheops.



FEBRUARY/MARCH 1917

Australian Light Horse went up to the line. Received a mail which was very welcome, especially the parcel from Madge. It was very windy and dusty today. In afternoon had a walk to El Arish town. It is out of bounds for troops, but our signal arm bands got us through. The place would appear to have about 3,000 inhabitants, and of course possesses a mosque. Many of the people have fair skins like Turks. There are practically no streets. The houses are just dotted about the sand. There are about a dozen shops, which are very poorly stocked. The houses are built of clay, and usually possess a high wall around the yard. The children were very eager for baksheesh, but they were so good-natured, and about six of them were hanging on to me as I went through the town. There is a lot of Turkish money for sale, and one chap offered to sell me a German pfennig. My Arabic was quite all right amongst the people, and they could understand me. Commenced work at JAR signal office today. Was glad of the chance, because we have had too much overtime on the lines. We are working 12 hours a day in the signal office.

23RD Nothing to report.

24TH Had a walk to a small mud village on sea shore like El Arish but smaller. Two of us were let off night duty 9 pm to 8 am tomorrow. We take turns off because work is slack at night. In the evening, Frankie and I set out to find Tommy Thompson, New Zealand Signal Corps. We plugged along for about four miles, and were informed it was two miles further, so we came back. It was very heavy under foot.

25TH Quiet day. Cannot get rid of my cold. Am feeling very seedy, but carrying on.

26TH Nothing fresh to report. On duty all night.

27TH Had some heavy rain during the night. It made a mess of our camp, which is on clay.

28TH Rain last night and this morning. We have heaps of puddles. I cannot get my cold better. Had a trip to canteen in afternoon. Managed to purchase a few groceries after waiting one and a half hours. Still they had some stuff in.

MARCH

1ST Jogging along fairly comfy and happy. Have not much spare time because the reliefs come round very soon.

2ND Worked all morning, and on again all night. We are getting fairly busy.

Eddie visiting
the Sphinx.

MARCH 1917



3RD Fine day. Had a nice walk on the beach this morning. Very busy at the office. Our footballers are at Cairo, and have won semi final of Egyptian Cup 3:2.

Postcard from Eddie's trip to Cairo.

4TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

5TH Quiet day. Have just about got rid of my cold.

6TH Had a walk through El Arish today. Saw some carved marble pillars, which were dug out of a well yesterday. They were supposed to be Roman.

7TH Quiet day. Had a swim. The sea was very strong and rough.

8TH Did duty at JAR 8 am to 1 pm, then finished. We are going to Sheikh Zuwaid tomorrow by train. It is a few miles this side of Rafa.

9TH Quiet morning, but eventful afternoon. Went by train from El Arish to Sheikh Zuwaid (Kilo 187). We bivouacked for night near the railway. There is more green on the desert. The Turks have sown a lot of barley. We are about two miles from the sea. We are now only a few miles from the border of Asia.

10TH Had a busy day moving to a camp. We are now on active service, and have finished with tents. Alf and I have got a tent *d'abri*. The base is about

MARCH 1917

four yards square, so when we get our goods inside there is not much room to spare. The enemy aircraft keep coming over, but the guns keep them high.

11TH Exceedingly windy and sandy all day. I assisted with the cooking.

12TH Another very windy day. Received a mail.

13TH Fairly fine day. Made our house a little more roomy by digging down.

14TH Still jogging along. I am cooking. We leave in a day or two for Rafa.

15TH Packing up today for Rafa. We get hostile aircraft over every day, but they never drop anything.

16TH Moved up to Rafa where railhead is situated. The boundary pillars of Africa and Asia are here also, but I have not seen them yet. Rafa is Kilo 202, about 15 kilos from Sheikh Zuwaid. I did the journey on foot. The desert gradually merged into gentle slopes of green grass and barley. The soil is very sandy, but it smells like soil.

17TH Very warm today. Had to move the bivouac, so put a larger one up. We had an explosion in the cookhouse. The fire rails were resting on a tin that contained some dubbin, and this tin exploded. My mate was badly burned, and they took him to hospital. I got a lot of boiling fat on my legs, but was able to carry on. In the evening had a walk to boundary pillars, and stepped across into Asia. I hope to see more of Palestine yet.

18TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report. Wrote home.

19TH Quiet day. Alf and his party strolled into the camp towards evening. The place is becoming full of signal troops.

20TH Very heavy day, owing to many arrivals.

21ST NA Section joined us today. I have asked for a change off the cooking, because the job is too heavy.

22ND We are going on a 10-day mobile stunt today round Palestine. Have been re-packing my kit, because we are leaving a lot behind. It has been a hard job to make a judicious selection, because what we leave behind we may lose.

23RD Quiet day. Preparing for the move, which has been postponed for a day or two.

158 EGYPTIAN TYPES AND SCENES. - WOMAN OF CAIRO. - LL.



MARCH 1917

24TH Many troops passing up. We get hostile aircraft over every day. They are kept well up by our guns. We are to leave tomorrow in a mobile condition, i.e. in what we stand up in. It is a pity to part with our comforts and some blankets, but we hope to see something and travel a little.

25TH Moved up to a point about six miles from Gaza passing through Khan Yunis District, Beni Sela and Deir el Belah. We laid a line from Deir el Belah to a place where the General Staff will be witnessing tomorrow's battle from. The countryside is very pretty, and covered with grass or barley and coloured flowers. I was put in charge of the water, which is more precious than gold. It is an unenviable job, because I have to keep refusing people.

26TH The attack commenced this morning. I was able to see Gaza from a hill, also the shelling from our ships. It has continued well into the afternoon. The aeroplanes are doing a lot of work. They say our cavalry has got round the Turks, but it is hard to tell how things are going.

27TH More fighting today, and some shelling from the Turks. I saw 800 prisoners come down. Had a journey to Khan Yunis to draw some rations. Had to wait several hours, but got fixed up at last. Missed the way when near camp, so stayed out all night. It is just the same, because I have no bivouac at present.

28TH Our infantry withdrew last night for a little while, because they are in need of food and water, and it will take 48 hours to arrange a depot here. Many fellows are going about half dead. Moved to another camp near Deir el Belah village today. Went out and laid a line to 22nd Mounted Brigade.

29TH Laying lines nearly all day. Was able to get a swim. We have had another move, because East Force moved a little way. I hope things will quieten down a little now, as we have all been roughing it. I have known what it is like to be thirsty, and I think tea is the finest drink in existence. There was no fighting today. I think the Turks have retired.

30TH Fairly quiet day. I was able to do some washing. It is said that the Turks are making for Khan Yunis, and trying to surround us. The tanks are a little way behind us, and will be going into action soon. The 53rd Division are going to break up the Turks' working parties on our right flank tonight. We are now camped in a nice field, but it is full of insects and tortoises, and fireflies are plentiful. We also hear jackals at night. Some natives won some corn from us last night. I am on picket tonight. I will give them a warm reception if they put in an appearance.

31ST Stayed in today to wire a cable wagon that had a short circuit on it. Had a little walk in the fields. There are quite a lot of decent stone wells, which I

MARCH/APRIL 1917

should think are of Roman construction. There is a carved capital near one which is certainly not of Egyptian design. I finished my tobacco today, I am sorry to say. I hope some will come up shortly. A lot of my Mysore friends are up here as bodyguards to East Force staff. They were in a sad way at Hill 310 for want of food and water. I was able to relieve them a little.

APRIL

1ST Very busy day. I did not finish work until 7 pm. Had a ride to the coast in the morning, and in afternoon went out working. We are putting all cables on bamboo poles, because the traffic cuts them up so. There has been no fighting today. The railway will soon be up here. The track has been marked out already.

2ND Drew rations in morning, and in afternoon went with four others to Khan Yunis for the purpose of reeling in cable. We have pitched our bivouacs in an orchard on the railway side. Our orchard is full of peaches and almonds, but unfortunately they are not ripe. I managed to purchase 12 eggs for 2/6d, so we had a good tea.

3RD Reeled in eight miles of cable. It was a stiff job with the old wagon. We drew bread for dinner on our return. My word it was welcome, after such a long course of biscuits. A section down here have offered to cook for us, so I shall just cook any extras which may crop up. There was fairly heavy shelling this morning.

4TH Laid telephone line to topographical section in Khan Yunis village. The village boasts of a ruined castle, which was built by the Crusaders. There are also some carvings. The castle seems to have been renovated by the Eastern people, as there are several stones carved with Arabic or Turkish. Reeled in some old cable in the afternoon.

5TH Reeled in a lot more old cable. Bought some more eggs at 2d each, also some tobacco and some matches from a YMCA which has just arrived. Received orders to rejoin section at Deir el Belah tomorrow.

6TH I stayed in to cook and guard kit this morning. Sixty One Airline have moved up to Belah station. Went out working in afternoon. Bent the wagon axle, so had to stay another night whilst it was being repaired at ordnance.

7TH Waited for wagon all morning. I found two sacks of corn for the horses. Returned to Deir el Belah in afternoon. It was a dusty journey. Our camp was being moved a few hundred yards. I cleared off for a swim, which was a treat. Had a peep at the tanks in an adjacent field. Received a parcel from Madge,

APRIL 1917



Cable laying party. which was very acceptable. Am well off now for baccho. Owing to the shortage, I made a great effort to purchase some. I got some myself from Khan Yunis, a chap brought some from El Arish, and some came in my parcel. It never rains but what it pours.

8TH Working in camp all day. Had a swim in afternoon. Was on picket, at night.

9TH No fighting today. The whole countryside is gradually being spoilt by the traffic. Where we had nice green fields, now we have dusty roads. Today I went on a working party to the Wadi Guzzee, which is well to the front. Things are still green out there. Had a swim on return. The sea was very rough.

10TH Not much doing today. I was running cable all day at the signal dump.

11TH Am 27 today. Went out on two working parties, but had fairly easy time.

12TH On a working party, one of our men got a scratch from a bomb dropped by a hostile. They come over frequently, but do not often drop anything.

13TH Out working all day. Elaborate preparations are being made for the coming battle. As regards signals and other branches it should be a success.

APRIL 1917

14TH Quiet day. The tanks went up to the front in the evening. They are fine machines, and look very peculiar when climbing over hedges etc.

15TH On a working party all day, laying lines for coming battle.

16TH Getting ready for move tomorrow.

17TH Moved up to EFA at 8 am. The bombardment and battle commenced. We could see a little of the shelling, but no fighting. We hear the troops have achieved their objective today.

18TH Very busy day. We laid lines to a point about a mile beyond Dorset House, which is to be new battle HQ for 54th Division. There was a fair bombardment, followed up by an advance by the infantry. I think things are going well. The countryside is very hilly and cut up by wadis and gulleys. I had difficulty in finding my section after dark. Had been left at new headquarters. I happened to look over our hill and heard one of our wits telling the tale. Frankie was left miles behind and did not reach the section tonight.

19TH Up about 4 am and down two miles back for stores. There is a heavy bombardment, and troops are advancing by the sound of things. I had a good view but it was hazy. We are roughing it now. Not many meals and one blanket. I am fairly contented though, and manage to jog along OK. About two years of this would soon age a fellow. Am waiting while the horses water, then we shall return and try for some breakfast. The troops are going at it all day, and in our own division a few hundred wounded passed down. As far as I can make out, we have not made a big advance, although it is hard to form an estimate. It is said the ANZACs and Imperial Mounted have taken Beersheba. We had a few shells near us today.

20TH Fairly busy day. We had a few shells over, and many hostiles. I had a shot at one, which came very low. About 2 pm we got the order to retire with battle HQ. As far as I can gather, we have suffered heavily, and Jonnie has five divisions against us. Our men are going to fall back on the Mansura Ridge. I have not seen more than 30 prisoners come down the 55th Division. I should say we have about 7,000 casualties on the whole front. In the afternoon, we retired to old position at EFA, about one mile west of Wadi Guzee.

21ST Nothing much doing today. We got up loads of rations, and had a good feed. I took over a dugout, because it is nice to have a home of your own. It affords a little shade from the sun also.

22ND Went out testing spare lines in morning. It was a long tramp. Received a mail in afternoon. Wrote home at night.

APRIL/MAY 1917

23RD Working in camp all day. The sun is very hot, but the nights are cool. There is very little doing at the front. The Turks sent a few big black shells about two miles up.

24TH Went back to old camp at Deir el Belah. A southerly wind has sprung up. The journey was the most uncomfortable I have ever made. The heat is terrible, and the dust is a foot thick all over. We suffered something awful in the afternoon.

25TH Same wind blowing, and same heat. There are more flies here than I have ever seen before. I think these conditions will soon begin to tell on the troops. I hear that we have 5,000 casualties and 1,000 of these are killed and missing. We have captured 200 from the Turks.

26TH Some shelling today. I went on cooking to relieve Morris who had gone to Cairo for a cup final. Not quite so hot today.

27TH A dull day with a few gentle showers. Nothing fresh to report.

28TH A dull day, for which we are thankful. Am getting some decent food, which has the effect of making me more contented. Our footballers have won the cup at Cairo.

29TH Nothing fresh to report.

30TH The footballers came back today with the cup and medals. I got a camera.

MAY

1ST Out on a party laying a line from Khan Yunis to Abassan el Kebir. Took a snap of Crusaders' castle at Khan Yunis.

2ND Working in camp. Applied for a transfer to one of the new signal companies. Had a swim in the afternoon. The sea was very rough.

3RD I see from war correspondent (TW Massey) that Gaza is of ancient history. It was here where Delilah betrayed Samson to the Philistines. The mosque was originally the Church of St John founded by the Knights Templar in the 11th. Century, and was later captured by Saladin. At Beersheba, Abraham dug the well of the oath. Local tradition attributes the castle at Khan Yunis to Saladin. Nothing fresh on our front. Our sergeant, one corporal and one sapper left for Alex where Capt McLaren is organising some signal companies.

MAY 1917

4TH Quiet day, but very hot. Received a mail. About 9.30 pm we were visited by several hostiles – four or five. They dropped about 18 bombs. Some seemed very near, but proved to be about 300 yards away. I had got into bed, so did not get up for the fun.

5TH Running cables all day. I think our aeroplanes have gone over tonight. I went for a swim after tea. All our chaps are digging in.

6TH Out working on a line all day. Eighteen of our machines went over last night, and no doubt gave the Turks something to go on with. Had a swim in the evening. A shark has been seen about 20 yards from shore. Commenced writing a letter, but had to chuck it. The hostiles came over and gave us a very rough time. I haven't a dugout, but shall make one tomorrow.

7TH Working on a line all day. We are dismantling a route on bamboo, poles. Got orders for lights out at 8 pm and shortly after the hostiles came over. This time we were able to get under.

9TH Out working all day. Had a look at some of the machines and bombs on the aerodrome.

10TH Reeling up cable in morning. Had a swim at night. Am going out tomorrow to 54th Division. We hear the Turks are going to attack.

11TH Came to 54th Division HQ near EFA. They set us on running through cable.

12TH We are working with the Divisional Signal Company and have dropped into their parades. We commenced at 5.15 am and finished at 4.30 pm. It is a change, but as everyone is working the same, I don't mind.

13TH Was informed on first parade that it would be a holiday today. I walked over to Deir el Belah, about four miles, to get some grub and a few stores. Had a swim down there.

14TH Quiet day. Still running through cable.

15TH Poling a line which runs across the Wadi Guzzee to 54th Battle Headquarters. Had a shower in morning.

16TH Carrying on with same line. Nothing fresh to report.

17TH On the same route. The work is very heavy.

MAY 1917

18TH Working on another job, digging holes for poles in morning, and pulling out cable in afternoon for 74th Division. Had to work after tea.

19TH A south wind was blowing today, and I have suffered owing to the hot wind and scarcity of water. It is not fit for a white man out here. A very heavy gale of hot wind blew all night. I could get no sleep.

20TH The wind changed today, and we were thankful. Finished work at noon, so went over to Deir el Belah on a horse for a swim and a feed. Came back quite refreshed.

21ST Stayed in camp today to look after the horses.

22ND Poling six lines today. It was very tiring out in the sun. There was a fairly lively artillery duel at sunset.

23RD Had no work today for a change.

24TH Running through cable all day. Very easy day.

25TH Quiet day. The 74th Division are taking over our positions shortly, so we expect to return to East Force.

26TH In morning, while we were out working, our bivouac was burned down. A lot of kit got holed, but the fire was extinguished in good time. In evening had a walk to Tel el Jemie, which lies about two miles to the east. The mound which is about 200 feet high, and is in the form of a double cross, is said to have been raised by the Crusaders. I got a few snaps. About a mile to the front, we saw our front line, because the Turks are not near. About two miles to the left front there was a farm which boasts of a good well. We use it during the day, and the Turks use it at night.

27TH Returned to section at Deir el Belah. Two NCOs left us – for good, I think.

28TH Quiet day. Working in camp all day. Another corporal left us today for promotion with 75th Division.

29TH Quiet day. Nothing to report.

30TH Put a telephone at new aerodrome today.

31ST Started operation work at HQ's old position tonight. Went for a swim and got washed back. However, here I am.

JUNE 1917

JUNE

1ST Find the new job OK. Went for a swim in afternoon.

2ND Received a mail. Nothing fresh to report.

3RD Quiet day. Had a dip in the afternoon. The hostiles have not visited us this moon.

4TH Quiet day. A new cable section arrived today.

5TH Had a dip in the morning. In evening went over to East Force new headquarters on the beach. The boys had made some fine dugouts in the cliff.

6TH Quiet day. Spent a long time in the sea.

7TH Nothing fresh to report.

8TH Quiet day. Tom Ewing got orders to go to Deir el Belah station, but Alf is taking his place at JRX so I am glad.

9TH Reconstructed the bivouac. Have made a fine place, which boasts of two windows and a door of gauze. I am hoping it will be both fly-proof and cool.

10TH Sunday. Spent morning in the sea. Nothing fresh to report.

11TH Very rough sea today. Very heavy gunfire about 9 pm. Made a bed this morning.

12TH Quiet day. Gathered some plums in a desert orchard. Had some very nice stewed fruit.

13TH Off from 8 am till 5 pm, so walked to Khan Yunis with my partner. We were able to get a nice few canteen stores. Also gathered some apricots and peaches. Enjoyed the trip, but it was a long walk.

14TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

15TH Our office (JRX) closed down at 8 am today. Had a holiday all day.

16TH Running cable all day in camp. Had a nice swim in the evening.

17TH Sunday. Wrote home. Had a swim in the afternoon.

JUNE/JULY 1917

18TH Running through cable all day.

19TH Running cable all day. Went for a walk to DLB offices in evening.

20TH Quiet day. Received a batch of photographs from Alex.

21ST Nothing fresh. The front seems to be at a standstill.

22ND Quiet day. Went for cholera inoculation, but the doctor did not turn up.

23RD Quiet day. Running cables.

24TH Sent photographs home. Got a gang of Gyppos to assist on the cable repairing.

25TH Received a mail. Nothing fresh to report.

26TH Received a parcel *ana mabsute kalles*. Nothing fresh to report. Inoculated for cholera today.

27TH Quiet day. Nearly all section going sick. The health is poor and the MO is going to see our OC.

28TH Got two horses to look after. One man going to Alex for a week's holiday, and one man going to Blighty. We hear that we are all going to have a holiday at Cairo or Alex.

29TH Morris went to hospital with tonsillitis. Our leave is being arranged. The troops seem generally fed up, so perhaps it will do them good.

30TH Leave postponed for a day or two. We are not doing much work on telephone lines, but of course there is always work with horses. In the evening went gathering almonds. Some are bitter and some are sweet. We got a bagful, but although we used care, they were not all sweet.

JULY

1ST Sunday. Quiet day. On picket at night.

2ND Quiet day. Leave not yet commenced.

3RD Party went on leave today. I have got another horse to look after, making a total of three.

JULY 1917

4TH Attended a lecture on Arabic by the chief chaplain. It was very interesting.

5TH Went to another lecture by chief chaplain on customs of Egypt. It was very interesting, and had I not read EW Lane's book I should have thought it was first-hand information, seeing that the speaker resided in Egypt prior to the outbreak of war. Practically all the anecdotes were from Lane's book.

6TH Quiet day. Had a swim in the evening. Received a mail.

7TH Another man going to hospital. Nothing fresh to report.

8TH Nothing fresh. Plenty of work.

9TH Still carrying on, but find the work fairly heavy.

10TH Had a swim in the evening. Some Maltese boatmen have come here for six months to unload from the ships. I had a chat with them. Their language appears to be a mixture of Arabic, Greek, Italian, French and English. Another batch of our section hope to go on leave soon. I was down, but have been washed out for some reason or another until the next time. The party came back from leave. They have had a good time. Capt. Hamish McLaren arrived with Artillery Signals (about three sections).

12TH Party went on leave. I am feeling played out, and will have to see the doctor, but see what change a holiday makes.

13TH Still crawling about and feeling very weak. The climate is gradually doing its work on me. Inoculated for cholera second time today.

14TH Nothing fresh to report.

15TH Sunday. Quiet day. We hear leave is stopped. In evening, Alf and I went on horses to see Joe Ward of 60th Division. They are up from Salonica, and at present camped this side of Khan Yunis. It was a nice ride.

16TH Joe Ward paid us a visit tonight. There has been heavy shelling at the front today.

17TH Quiet day. I am down for leave by next batch. I have asked to go to Luxor.

18TH Nothing fresh to report. I hear we are going to live in tents.

19TH Went gathering prickly pears today. Got pricked all over, and suffered

JULY 1917

much pain. In evening after swim went to East Force headquarters to hear Scottish Division band. There was a drum and fife band in addition to the brass band. Some Turkish cavalry made an attack this afternoon somewhere near Shallal. They were beaten off by our mounted troops who captured some prisoners. About 9 pm there appears to be something doing on right flank. Numerous Very Lights were going up, and there was a lot of firing. We hear the Hants. were engaged.

20TH Two of the men on leave returned tonight. Saw four cavalry prisoners this morning. They were well dressed, not smartly, and looked well fed. A few shells came round about the camp after tea, so Jonnie must have got a long gun up. As we walked to the beach for a swim, several shells passed over our heads. The beach presents a busy spectacle. Gangs of Gyppos were retreating at the double carrying their belongings. Later on an officer drove them back. As far as possible the natives were crouching in the cliffs and trying to save their lives. Englishmen were hustling with the niggers to get a place. Truly it is our courage which has made us British what we are.

21ST Quiet day. Drew £10 and went on leave to Luxor. The first step was by Army Railway (220 kilos). Left Belah at 5 pm, arrive Kantara 7 am tomorrow.

22ND Had a good breakfast and shower bath, and left for Cairo at 9.18 am. Arrived at 1.40 pm. Spent afternoon making a few purchases, and visiting





JULY 1917

Heliopolis. This quarter of Cairo contains some wonderful buildings. At 8 pm left by train for Luxor. It was very crowded, but I managed to doze a little. We were able to get into a 2nd class carriage. The 3rd are very uncomfortable. There seems to be less English spoken up this line, and fruit is cheaper.

23RD Got up about 4 am as it was light. Found we were passing through a very fertile country, watered by the River Nile. Maize seems to be one of the chief crops. There are many villages built of mud bricks. One sees very few Europeans. We were the only visitors into Luxor, which is a big tourist centre. We were pounced upon by 30 guides and donkey boys, who followed us down the streets. After several attempts to scatter them by peaceful methods, I took off my bandolier and belted them. We fixed up at a Luxor hotel which is a fine place. We are the only visitors. A guide was recommended to us, and we are getting on OK with him. I dare say he will swindle us before the finish, but he is a necessary evil, as we cannot get any literature about the place. In the morning we visited Luxor Temple, which faces the Nile. The ruins contain dozens of huge pillars, about six feet high by 12 feet diameter. There are also many fine statues of the pharaohs. In afternoon drove to Karnak and visited a temple similar to that of Luxor. This temple, which covers 30 acres, formerly covered 1,000 acres. It possesses hundreds of fine columns, two very fine gateways, also a few sphinx and other statues. In evening had a walk round town which was partly deserted. Am just going to enjoy a sleep in a real bed.

24TH Had a busy day. In morning across water to Queen's Temple. Saw dozens of beautiful ruins. Also some recently discovered paintings on the walls of some chambers. The paintings are in a fine state of preservation. Saw also the broken statue of Ramesses the Great. It is one of the seven wonders of the world. Originally it weighed 1,000 tons. The Colossi of Memnon are two fine figures. The whole of the journey at the other side was by donkey. They are comfortable animals, and save one a lot of walking in the heat. In afternoon visited the local weekly market. The fellaheen were congregated in the market place, just the same as the weekly markets in England. Everything was very quaint. Cobblers were busy repairing slippers, weavers weaving cloths on primitive looms, men selling all kinds of clothes, also wheat, sugar, dates, goats, sheep &c. Drove in a carriage two or three miles out to a pottery factory. The natives made a few articles for our benefit. We also saw a pigeon farm. There were many hundreds of birds. It has been a very interesting day, and no one who has not been here can have any idea of the fine buildings. The methods of travel, by donkey and carriage are necessary, owing to the heat.

Colossus of
Memnon, Karnak
and Temples
at Luxor.

At 10 pm I am perspiring freely. Maximum temperatures today 112, minimum 84. Forgot to mention that we saw some Bisharines in the market. They are a kind of wild men from the desert.

JULY 1917



25TH Off at 7 am across the river by boat, then by donkey about five miles into the hills. We saw a temple on the way. We rode several miles between rugged hills covered with volcanic stone. At the end of our journey, we came to the tombs of the kings. There are 50 of them, but we only saw down two. Many years ago, some king removed all the bodies to another place, and only in one instance was the body found in the tomb. The vaults are very roomy, somewhat like going down to a tube station. There are four or five flights of stairs. The walls and ceilings are carved, and in some places coloured. Some of the painting is in a fine state of preservation. In one tomb we saw the mummy. The actual bone, flesh and skin of a king who lived 1600 BC. He had a fairly intelligent face and good teeth. We also saw three more bodies (age not stated). They had beautiful heads of hair and were good looking. On returning to town, had a look round the shops, watching the various workers such as goldsmiths, tinsmiths and cobblers etc. At 2 pm went for a sail up the Nile in a boat. Went about 11 miles. Had a swim in the Nile and partook of tea. Then returned in time for dinner. It was a fine, cool trip. We had two musicians on board, with reeds and tom toms. They played us all the latest Arabic love songs. In the evening had a stroll round the town. Chatted with a few of the residents. Have met several dragomen who know English, French and Italian, but they are out of work at present. We are the only visitors here, and everybody seems to know our business. Many who have done a few months in the Egyptian Labour Corps or the Camel Corps have had a chat with us about various places they have worked at. Many of them are satisfied

JULY 1917

with one spell of Army life, and have no wish to return to it. They contract for three months only. Many of the *walads* would like to go back with us, and I should not wonder if they are not waiting at the station tomorrow morning.

26TH Up early for return to Cairo. All the hotel staff were up too for their baksheesh. We got off as easy as possible. These niggers seem to forget we are fighting for them. Left at 6.30 am and arrived Cairo 9 pm. Passed through the fertile Nile Valley, and had a good view of the fellahen at work. The chief crops at present are *dhora* (camel food) and cotton. Got a shake down in the concert hall of ANZAC Hostel for night.

27TH Up early, and away to the Nile Barrage. There are two barrages – one of the Damietta branch and one over the Rosetta branch of the Nile. The barrage boasts of some fine ornamental gardens, which are very cool and shady. Made the journey back to Bonlac by Nile steamer. It was a fine trip. The low banks of the Nile were covered with watermelons. In the gardens, visited the museum containing the models of the irrigation system of Egypt. In evening went to the pictures.

28TH Up early and away to Materich by train. Here we saw the Virgin well and tree, also obelisk. This is supposed to be the place where the Virgin Mary rested on the way through Egypt. We also visited the ostrich farm. The birds are very clean and can run very quickly. Some had fine crops of feathers. Had

Heiroglyphics.



JULY/AUGUST 1917



a rest in hostel in afternoon. Left by 6.10 pm train for Kantara. Stayed night at Sgt. Hudson's, Kantara.

29TH Off by 6 am train for Kantara East. Arrived Deir el Belah at 9 pm. after a tedious journey. Altogether have travelled 1,300 miles in the train at a cost of 22/-. The whole trip has cost about £10 10s. That includes photography.

30TH I am taking badly to work. Have got two horses. Had a swim in evening, and did a lot of washing in the sea.

31ST Quiet day. One of our men went to work at 198th Battery. I went with him to bring the horse back. The battery was about seven miles from here up the line. There was very little to see, but it was a nice ride.

AUGUST

1ST Nothing fresh to report. Sent some photographs home.

2ND Quiet day. Am feeling run down again. Am also *ma fish feluce* and waiting for pay day. Had a swim in the evening.

3RD Quiet day. Had a horse inspection. Heard that a stunt is coming off shortly.

AUGUST 1917

4TH Quiet day. Still feeling too weak to walk about. Otherwise everything OK. We are not working too hard at present. I have plenty to occupy my spare time – French, Italian, Arabic and arithmetic, to say nothing of reading matter. Sent some photos home.

5TH H Morris came out of hospital today. Two men to hospital yesterday and two today. I had to go on cooking for a few days.

6TH We are moving to Kelab in two days' time. It is about nine kilos down the line. Got some reinforcements today.

7TH Very hot day. I find the work very heavy.

8TH Have 10 men in hospital and four more going this morning. We are packing up for a move. General Allenby is bringing GHQ up to Kelab near Khan Yunis. East Force Headquarters is being broken up and we are going to be GHQ Signal Company as formerly.

9TH Packing up all morning. Left at 4 pm and arrived new camp at 9 pm. It was a tedious journey, and as we had such a lot of gear, the horses kept jibbing. We also had new drivers. Our section is almost breaking up. We have 14 in hospital. Our camp is nestled amongst some desert sand hills, half way between Khan Yunis and Kelab. We are a few hundred yards from the Army railway, and can just see the sea, which is about four miles away. We get plenty of breeze, so perhaps our health will improve.

10TH I am still cooking. Spent all my spare time building a bivouac. Harold Morris, Alf Smith and I are living together. I am making a large structure

Temple of
Ramesses.



AUGUST 1917

about 12 feet by seven feet by six feet high. Alf arrived from Belah after dark. I am sorry to say he's got a touch of the fever which seems to be going around.

11TH Alf very bad this morning with temperature of 104. Persuaded him to go in, and they kept him. Harold Morris is beginning today, and if he is no better tomorrow morning, he will have to go in. Finished the bivouac and made a bed. Have got a bookcase and everything quite comfy. It is almost too windy to burn candles, but our home-made acetylene works fine. Fortunately I have three tins of carbide with me.

12TH Fairly busy day. Harold has a fairly high temperature, but is going to rest up here.

13TH Quiet day. Frankie was taken ill but is staying in camp.

14TH I had to go to Khan Yunis to draw rations this morning. Alf came back from hospital half cured, and Harold was kept in.

15TH Had to go for rations again this morning. The journey takes about three hours. It is very interesting to pass through the village. There is a small school and a bazaar. Harold came out of hospital today.

16TH Quiet day. Harold and Alf are both very weak and poorly. I finished cooking today and have got a single mount.

17TH Had to go to Beni Sela for water. It is about three miles away over the sand. The French troops were lined up for inspection by General Allenby, as they have volunteered for work in the trenches. I think they are war-worn troops from Verdun. We hear that some of our men have mutinied.

18TH Quiet day. I seem OK with just one horse of my own. Had a ride to GHQ this morning to buy canteen stores for the section. I think that is going to be my job. They are spending thousands of pounds fitting up GHQ. Alf and Harold are both very weak. The bad water we are getting is troubling Alf.

19TH Had a ride all round GHQ in morning. Got some good drinking water.

20TH Had a ride to Khan Yunis in morning. There are some very interesting sights in the village, which is densely populated. The village is completely wired round, and nobody is allowed out. They are going to close the village absolutely tomorrow.

21ST Had a ride to Deir el Belah to get some nuts and bolts from the IOM. It was a long journey, but I enjoyed the ride.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1917

22ND Had a ride to Kelab Station in morning. We are gradually losing our extra men. It is said that leave is about to be granted, and there is possibly some truth in the yarn, as the names of men who have been out more than 18 months are being taken.

23RD Quiet day. Received pay.

24TH Had a busy morning buying at the canteen. Spent about £6 on dry stores, and £7 on beer. Drink seems to give a little consolation to the troops, but it occasionally causes bother. For this reason I am having nothing to do with the sale, but I do the buying.

25TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

26TH Quiet day. We are going to move in two days' time.

27TH Quiet day. We are making preparations to move.

28TH Very busy moving stores to a camp out of Khan Yunis boundary. The village is being wired all round to keep in the natives who are suspected of spying. The new camp is about a mile distant.

29TH Completed the move, and got settled down by dark. We have made our bivouac like a palace. It is the best I have seen as yet. Was on picket 9.30 to 11.30 pm.

30TH Busy day. Went to Khan Yunis at 5.30 am on my horse, then to Kelab Station after breakfast for canteen stores. In afternoon went to Abassan el Kebir for water.

31ST Quiet day. Went to Kelab in morning.

SEPTEMBER

1ST Very busy day. Went to Deir el Belah to draw some wagons from ordnance. I had a bit of difficulty getting water for my two teams at Beni Sela, as the whole place is wired round like a maze. The villagers here are guarded by French Zouaves, who speak either French or Arabic. I can do a bit at both languages, so am OK. Went over to 21 Corps at Belah. Arrived home about 5.30 pm. Shall have to make two more journeys before all the wagons are ready and fitted with sand tires.

2ND Rode to Kelab canteen in morning. It is rather a longer ride now. When I returned, I had to speak to some French soldiers on behalf of our Australian

SEPTEMBER 1917

officer. Our parade changes tomorrow. They are putting an extra half hour on.

3RD Had a ride round Kelab in the morning. Nothing fresh to report.

4TH Quiet day. Went out riding to Kelab in morning. Nothing fresh to report.

5TH Went to Kelab in morning. Nothing fresh to report.

6TH Busy day. Was over at Kelab twice. Nothing fresh to report.

7TH Went to Kelab in morning. Had a long talk with the Algerians at night. Some of them speak good French.

8TH Went to Kelab in morning. When I returned, Alf had left for Shallal for a few days. It is on our right flank, about 10 miles from here.

9TH Sunday. Quiet day. Our section played NN at football and won 4:0. Have heard the Turks are attacking in three or four days' time.

10TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report. I seem to have very little spare time in this camp, and do not get much studying done.

11TH The Turks have not attacked. I went to Kelab in morning and received a mail.

12TH On line guard all day. Went to Kelab in morning.

13TH Went to Kelab in morning. Set a trap to catch some jackals overnight, but had no luck.

14TH Set a snare tonight for the jackals. I hope to have some luck.

15TH Went to Kelab in morning. Had a chat with my Algerians at night. They are going to a new post tomorrow. Twenty per cent are going home on leave.

16TH Went on rifle inspection in the morning. Wrote home at night. Nothing fresh to report.

17TH Went to Kelab in the morning. Received pay in afternoon.

18TH Very windy day. Nothing fresh to report.

SEPTEMBER 1917

19TH Went to Kelab in morning. There was a big gale blowing all day, and an awful sand storm, which almost blotted out the sun.

20TH Alf returned today. He has brought back news of a coming stunt, so we shall soon be on the move again.

21ST Frankie got kicked at football, so I had to go on rations this morning. I got a signal writing job in afternoon, and Alf has taken over my horse for the time being.

22ND Quiet day. Went for rations in the morning. Painting all day.

23RD Busy day. We had a kit inspection in our own time. Broadhead returned from compassionate leave to Blighty, and brings back a cheerful account.

24TH Received pay: 10/6d for subsistence whilst on holidays. Nothing fresh to report.

25TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

26TH Quiet day. Have finished painting, and taken my horse over again.

27TH Nothing fresh to report. Went to Kelab in the morning.

Fixing lines in
the desert.



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1917

28TH Went to Kelab in the morning. Everything is quiet as a farm, and the offensive is postponed for a month.

29TH Quiet day. Went to Kelab in the morning, and received a mail.

30TH Sunday. Worked all day on line guard. Went to Kelab in the morning. We are going on a stunt shortly.

OCTOBER

1ST Quiet day. Had gas drill after 5 pm. It is a lot of bosh. Wrote home at night.

2ND Have been run this morning, but the case was dismissed fortunately. I happened to be in my bivouac at midnight when the officer walked round the horse lines. Nothing fresh to report.

3RD Went on a horse to work near Rafa dismantling a line. It was fairly heavy work, but a nice change.

4TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

5TH Went out with camels in morning to draw water. Went down to Kelab in afternoon to see a chap off on compassionate leave.

6TH Went back into Egypt near Sheikh Zuwaid on a working party. We are dismantling a seven mile route. It looks a decent job, and will be a nice change.

7TH Sunday. Our work consists of pulling down poles and digging up stays. We had the afternoon off today.

8TH Still on the same job and enjoying the work. Nothing fresh to report.

9TH Nearly finished our work of pulling down poles. The 10th Division were about us all night on manoeuvres. Theirs is a hard life.

10TH Pulling down poles all day. Afternoon holiday.

11TH Rested after moving to Rafa near the boundary pillar.

12TH Walked over the sand hills for a swim. It was a fine beach and very enjoyable.

13TH Walked into camp at Khan Yunis today. Struck the bivouac and moved into a tent. Got nicely settled down.

OCTOBER 1917

14TH Sunday. Quiet day. Wrote home.

15TH Went to Kelab twice today for canteen stuff. I have to buy in for the officers' mess for the time being. At Kelab in the morning. Painting in the afternoon. We hear there is a stunt coming off.

17TH Had a trip to GHQ in morning and one to the canteen in afternoon. Seem to be going at it all day.

18TH Quiet day. Worked in camp.

19TH Have got a terrible cold and am feeling very weak. We move tomorrow to Gamli about 14 miles from here on the right flank.

20TH Left at 1 pm. for Gamli and arrived at dark. It is a busy place on the banks of the Wadi Guzzee. The country we crossed over was very dreary.

21ST Went down to the wadi in morning. It is very deep and the sides are quite rugged.

22ND Bought canteen stores in morning. Running cable all day.

23RD Spent all morning at canteen. Hanging about in the afternoon. Was instructed in the art of playing crib at night.

24TH Quiet day, but plenty of stuff going up the line. We go up tomorrow.

25TH Moved off at 4 pm, and made towards the right up the banks of the wadi. We camped near a place called Esani. The countryside is very barren, and covered with scrub. Our moonlight ride was very enjoyable. We were cool and quite comfortable. We had occasional glimpses of the wadi, which presented a fine appearance in the moonlight, with its rugged cliffs.

26TH Found on waking that our camp is in decent surroundings. We are on sandy soil covered with scrub. Am sorry to say we had to move a mile further up, and dropped in a kind of field at the side of a very dusty road. Clouds of dust and dirt blow onto our food. However, I have got a bit of shade.

27TH The stunt has not started yet. We are situated about two miles from our night outpost. Had to pack up and move about half a mile. It is very annoying after having erected a shelter. I was very poorly all day with dysentery and sickness.

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1917

28TH Stayed in same place all day. Am half dead with dysentery &c. but am hanging on in hopes of seeing the stunt.

29TH Up at 5 am. and off to a new position about half a mile away. We are to be attached to the Desert Column Mounted Corps for the stunt. Alf went to Khalassa about 10 miles away.

30TH Had a ride out in the sand cart to Khalassa with rations. The countryside is very hilly and barren. Apart from passing two Bedouins, we saw nobody. Our boys are in a Turkish building like a church. I think Khalassa was smashed by our demolition party last May. The Sheriff of Mecca has come in with our troops on the extreme right. Our NB detachment went out six miles beyond the white house at midnight. They are to be ready to lay cable to Beersheba as soon as it falls.

31ST The stunt started today all round, but do not know how they have progressed. I am doing duty as a mounted linesman at WCOL. On duty all night. Was out on faults until midnight. I hear we have reached all objectives for today. I was out till midnight on a line, then out again next morning.

NOVEMBER

1ST Busy all day on the lines. Beersheba has been taken and the Mounted Corps has moved in.

2ND Have orders to go into Beersheba, but all our wagons are broken. There is an awful plague of flies today.

3RD Left for Beersheba at 6.30 pm. Very dreary ride along dusty roads. Arrived at 2 am.

4TH We are camped on a piece of stony waste ground, which is covered with rubbish and dirt. The dust is blowing all day, and the sun is almost blotted out. It is the dirtiest place I have ever seen. Had a walk round the town. There are some fine large buildings which appear to be new. There is a fairly large main street, which boasts of plenty of small shops. The railway station is not damaged in any way. There are two pairs of lines. I should say the place has a population of about 10,000, but they all left before we came in. Our entry has been rather sudden, so the Turks have not had time to destroy things. There were many traps left, and several people have been wounded through picking up things.

5TH Quiet day. Section standing by all day. I had a further look round the town. The PO is a very fine building, and is now doing service as a signal

NOVEMBER 1917

office. The section moved off at 8 pm, leaving myself and three other operators behind for duty in an office.

6TH Quiet day. Our troops are trying to capture some wells in the centre. I had a further look round the town. There are some very large pumping stations and mills which have been destroyed.

7TH Quiet day. The section rolled in at 6 pm. We had some stew ready for them.

8TH Standing by all day. Gaza and several other small places have fallen. Had to reel in a small line in the afternoon. We have been treated to our usual dust storm all the afternoon, but today I think it was worse than ever. The dust is so thick that we can only see a few yards ahead. Our food gets covered as we eat it. There are thousands of half-dazed flies, which shelter in our bivouacs, so there is no peace anywhere. I would sooner have a good hour's shelling than this vile dust.

9TH Working in 20th Corps office. It is in a building which used to be the PO. The conditions are awful, owing to dust and flies.

10TH Worked in 20th Corps.

11TH Moved early in morning, and went right across the country for Gaza. Passed through miles of country recently captured from the Turks. There are many captures such as wagons and guns, and tons of all kinds of ammunition. On Mansura Ridge, which we reached at dusk we saw many bodies, almost skeletons lying out. They have been there since second Gaza battle. [17 April 1917] Kipped down for the night near Ali Muntar.

12TH Up at 5 am. Had walk over Ali Muntar, which has been blasted to bits by our shells. Had a near view of Gaza and took a photograph. Went round the road almost as far as Gaza, then went about five miles beyond to lay some cable back. There are hundreds of dumps of Turkish material, and no doubt the captured shells will number many thousand. There are hundreds of natives and Bedouins making back to their home. They are all looting and scrounging. We finished about 9 pm and got settled down a few miles beyond Gaza.

13TH Was up at 5 am and out laying lines between the 21st Corps and the Desert Corps. Got back at 11 am for breakfast. It is a rough life. Had a wash in the afternoon.

14TH In camp all morning, and built a bivouac. Went out in the dark at night with the sand cart for water. Alf was with me. We got water at No. 1 Well,

NOVEMBER 1917

Gaza, and on our return journey we went down an incline, and the wagon turned over. The fanatis and we too were thrown out. Poor Alf has a broken collar bone, and I have only a crushed forearm. He had to go into hospital. The accident was unavoidable, owing to the darkness, and it is lucky we did not get more seriously hurt. If the fanatis had fallen on us we should have been killed.

15TH Worked in Capt McLaren's signal office 7 am to 1 pm. Packed up and left by lorry at 3 pm. for a place about one and a half miles beyond Julius. We are about 18 miles beyond Gaza. We erected a tent and got down for the night.

16TH Fixed up our office for an advanced GHQ. Nothing doing all day. Walked about three miles to a mud village named Bedaras. My Arabic was understood by the people, and I had a pleasant time bartering with the natives for eggs and oranges. They were not too anxious to sell. Some of the people were very nice.

17TH Waiting for the advanced GHQ coming up. Nothing fresh to report. There is a Jewish colony about three miles ahead, and the people are said to be very decent.

18TH Quiet day. Had a move of about quarter of a mile. Saw 2,000 prisoners coming down.

19TH Visited Es Suaffir el Gharbiyeh which is a very dirty mud village. We opened office. Heavy rain at night.

20TH Worked in office all day. Heavy rains at night which flooded everything.

21ST Very busy in office. No tents have arrived for us yet.

22ND Working very hard in the office. It is awfully cold. The tents have arrived.

23RD On two reliefs, so we're doing about 12 hours' a day. The grub is not very fine, however we are plodding along fairly well.

24TH Still working very hard. Little spare time.

25TH Still busy. Had a walk to Beit Duras in afternoon. Bought a supply of tobacco.

26TH Nothing fresh to report.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1917

27TH Have got some more staff up, but still on two reliefs.

28TH Nothing fresh to report.

29TH Visited the Jewish colony which is named Kastineh. It is some place, and did my eyesight good. There are about 100 houses, mostly of wood, with tiled roofs. The people are generally fair, and all the young females who were doing farming work wear hobble skirts. Everybody sells nice brown bread at 1/- for a 2d loaf. A lot of the people speak French. I got on well with one chap who told me it was only three weeks since the Germans and Turks had been buying at his shop. Yiddish, Arabic and Turkish are also spoken.

30TH Still working hard.

DECEMBER

1ST Am feeling in need of a wash, and have only been able to get half a pint per day for the last fortnight. Walked to a village named Suffrier, and took my washing down. There was a well about 30 yards deep, and we got water enough for a bath and a week's washing. Am feeling OK now.

2ND Still working hard. Nothing fresh to report. They seem to be having a breather up at the front.

3RD Nothing fresh to report.

4TH The work is cooling down a little. Nothing fresh to report.

6TH Nothing fresh to report.

7TH Raining in torrents all day. No grub cooked for us. Nobody cares. The tent leaks and we are damp. However it won't last for ever.

8TH Very wet day. There are some deaths from exposure.

9TH This morning at 10.50 am, the 53rd and 74th both entered Jerusalem without much opposition. It has come off through the fine generalship of General Allenby.

10TH Very cold day, but fine.

11TH Fine bright day. The troops are advancing to secure Jerusalem.

12TH Had a walk to Ibdas, and saw some captured guns.

DECEMBER 1917

13TH Nothing fresh. Plenty of congrats coming through the office for General Allenby.

14TH Work very slack. Had a walk to Ibdas, and bought some eggs.

15TH We move on Tuesday.

16TH Prisoners up to date 12,036 including 562 officers.

17TH Having an easy time just now. We shall be moving shortly.

18TH We are dismantling today, and moving tomorrow.

19TH Moved up to Seyed by Ford car. It is about two miles beyond junction station. The country is nearly all under cultivation.

20TH It rained all day. We are in a ploughed field, and the mud is something awful. We carry stones of mud on our boots. We are on the edge of a mountain.

21ST A little finer today. Things are drying up. I visited some ancient caves on one of the hills. They look very ancient. We are to have three reliefs. I am to be supervisor and look after the traffic until some of the corporals come up.

22ND Nothing fresh to report.

23RD Not many signs of Christmas about. The captured material has been totalled. It amounts to 90 guns, 58,000 shells and millions of small arms and ammunition, many wagons &c. We had butter issued today for the first time.

24TH Nothing fresh to report. I have got up a few canteen stores, and am considered fairly lucky, because nobody has anything.

25TH What a hopeless dawn! Raining all night and still raining all day. Nothing but piles of mud and pools of water. We got a little food, but have seen no mails or Christmas grub. However, despite the damp, I am still jogging along. I have never seen such rain in all my life.

26TH Raining all night, but cleared up about 10 am. We are feeling in better spirits now that things are drying up. Only had half rations today.

27TH Nice day. We begin to feel alive again.

28TH Had a walk about three miles as far as the Jewish settlement. We had tea and cakes.

DECEMBER 1917

29TH Had a walk along a wadi, which was like a country lane. We got plenty of flowers such as anemones and irises &c. Saw a couple of boys with sheep and lambs.

30TH Went into a new office today. I had a walk to a Crusaders' ruined castle about three miles away. Could see Ramleh and Yebnah over the hills.

31ST Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

Dessert road,
camel post.





1918

JANUARY

1ST Wet day. Poor grub. Bad start for a new year.

2ND Food better today. I made an acetylene lamp with a health salt tin.

3RD Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

4TH Some tents sent to our new position today. It is near Ramleh.

5TH Looks as if we are in for some more rain. Nothing fresh to report.

6TH Rained all day. We have to keep in the tents. However it will not last for ever.

7TH Another miserable day.

8TH Still raining a little, but looks as if it will take up.

9TH Fine day. We are moving to a place near Ramleh tomorrow.

10TH Worked all last night. Closed down at noon. Set off to the Latrum road on foot. It was a slog. Then by motor lorry to Ramleh. The road was very bumpy. The Latrum district is very picturesque and hilly. There is a decent looking monastery there. We passed through Ramleh and disembarked. Ramleh looks a fine town with its few mosques and Christian churches. There

Eddie with
local people.

JANUARY 1918

is a fine ruined Crusaders' castle. We went about a mile beyond Ramleh to GHQ. It is a fine spot with a bricky red sand. There is a very picturesque German orphanage, which has some finely wooded grounds.

11TH Pitched tents in morning and did duty in afternoon. Shall go into Ramleh as soon as possible

12TH Rained all day.

13TH Still raining. I had a rough time.

14TH Had a walk round by C in C's house (German orphanage). There are some fine vineyards of oranges, almonds, olives, grapes &c.

15TH Had a walk down to Ramleh in afternoon. It is a fine spot. The chief features are the Crusaders' castle, Esau's tomb, convent of Arimathea, and Neil Primrose's grave. I tasted some grape wine, which is fine stuff in moderation.

16TH Set off at 9 am for Deiran about three miles away where Deacorps are stationed. It is a fine Jewish village. I had a hot bath at the public baths. Spent a bit of time with the WCO boys. On way back was picking oranges and lemons in the groves.

17TH Had a walk to Ramleh in morning. We are having very fine weather just now.

18TH Got paid today. Managed to get some change.

20TH Had a walk to Deiran and a canteen at Kilo 293. An enterprising Jew at Deiran has got some fine olive wood articles down from Jerusalem. They are good stuff, but the price is like dead robbery. I want to buy some stuff, but I think I will wait a while. Bought oranges at 60 for 1/- today.

21ST GHQ Signals commenced to arrive today. I had a nice ride in a Ford through Ramleh

22ND GHQ continue to arrive. The wires were transferred today.

23RD I had lots of supervising jobs today. There is a lot of work in the office.

24TH My section arrived today. I got two parcels from home in good condition, also my kit bag.

26TH Had a walk into Ramleh in morning. Saw most of the native quarters.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1918

27TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

28TH Raining all day, but not so bad as formerly.

29TH A few showers again. Had a walk round by Bir Salem village in the morning. We are getting plenty of red tape in the camp. Wish I could get a move.

30TH Fine again today. Had a walk to the station at Kilo 295.

31ST Still fine. Have had no mail for a long time. They seem to be hung up somewhere.

FEBRUARY

2ND Very windy. Received some photos from Alex today.

3RD Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

4TH Had a walk to Ramleh in the morning.

5TH Raining all day, but not so severe as formerly.

News from Alf, who was recovering from a broken collar bone after the water carrier incident.



FEBRUARY 1918

6TH Been on night duty, but had a good sleep. Set off after breakfast to the Jewish village of Richout. It is quite a prosperous little colony, with some decent houses, and a synagogue. We found out a place and had a decent lunch. The people speak German and their means of living is farming. There are many fine vine and almond orchards.

7TH Raining all day.

8TH Still showery. Nothing fresh to report.

9TH Quiet day. Still raining.

10TH Came fine after breakfast. Nothing fresh to report.

11TH We are getting busier, and I think there is going to be an advance in the near future. I had a game of football in the afternoon and got kicked in the eye.

12TH Had another walk to Richout. We have been on biscuits for the past few days, owing to a breakdown of line. The cooking is much better now though. We had tinned mutton today.

13TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

14TH Set out by the broad gauge railway and landed at Ludd. It seems an old town, but I was not able to get inside. I took a few snaps. We got bread today, so the railway is working again.

15TH I am on floating duty, so will not get so much time off during the day, but every night in bed.

16TH Nothing fresh to report.

17TH Nothing fresh to report.

18TH Made a bed, and feel quite happy. There was a whist drive tonight, but I was working.

19TH Nothing fresh to report.

20TH Our troops started an advance beyond Jerusalem.

21ST Jericho fell this morning. Our troops are not having a deal of opposition.

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1918



A Jewish village.

22ND Was inoculated against typhoid and cholera today. There was a concert at night, but I was working.

23RD Was on my back all day with fever and sickness, as a result of the inoculations.

24TH Nothing fresh to report. Resumed work again.

25TH Quiet day. There are signs of an offensive in a few weeks' time. Nothing fresh to report.

26TH Nothing fresh to report.

27TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

28TH Had no mails for a long time.

MARCH

1ST Had a walk to Ludd station in morning. It is going to be a big centre.

2ND Inoculated for typhoid and cholera, second dose.

MARCH 1918

3RD Had a nice walk through the olive groves, which look very fine at this time of the year.

4TH Short day today. Had a stroll through the woods in the morning.

5TH Quiet day. Nothing fresh to report.

6TH Troops advanced about 3,000 yds. on 12 mile front.

7TH Another small advance today.

8TH Nothing fresh to report.

9TH A few prisoners taken today. Our people are publishing a newspaper in Yiddish, Arabic and English. Have not been able to get one yet.

10TH Long day today. Our troops are advancing. Nothing fresh to report.

11TH Nothing fresh to report.

12TH Get 3d a day service pay from 29 September.

13TH Was relieved at the office to do some painting in the section. It will be a change.

14TH Working in the section today. I am hoping to manage a trip to Jaffa whilst I am away from the office.

15TH Did a little painting in morning. And had a rest in the afternoon. It has been blowing a strong gale all day.

16TH Very wet day. I have not been able to go to Jaffa owing to the wet.

17TH Went back to the office today. It is still raining very hard.

18TH The weather took up today. Nothing fresh to report.

19TH Got disinfected at Ludd today. I think we are going to have an advance shortly.

20TH Working all day. Nothing fresh to report.

21ST Changed duties to be off until 5 pm. Set off at 7.30 am to Jaffa on a cycle. It is about 17 kilos from here. The place is fairly big, and has a good

MARCH/APRIL 1918

main street, which is full of life. There are many fine buildings. The town hall is exceptionally fine. There are plenty of shops and restaurants, although it is not possible to get a good feed owing to the scarcity of foodstuffs. I had a look round the building which is used by the 21 Corps staff. Our pigeons use the attics, so I was able to get a good view of the place and take some snaps. All the approaches to the sea are out of bounds. I was not able to see the place where Tabitha is supposed to be buried. I saw the house of Simon the Tanner. On the whole, I am very favourably impressed, and would like to spend a week or two there.

22ND Am feeling tired after the ride.

23RD Nothing fresh to report.

24TH The German offensive has begun in France. They are attacking with 47 divisions all on the line.

25TH We appear to be holding our own in France. The HAC [*Honourable Artillery Company*] gave us a good concert in the evening.

26TH We have reached Es Salt on this front.

27TH Nothing fresh to report.

28TH Nothing fresh to report.

29TH Our troops are advancing a little up here.

30TH I hear that we are to have another advanced GHQ. Hope I am on it.

APRIL

1ST Nothing fresh to report.

2ND Our people have taken Es Salt across the Jordan.

3RD I am feeling a little cramp with too much sending. Shall have to steady up a bit.

4TH Nothing fresh to report.

5TH Nothing fresh to report.

6TH Still hanging on.

APRIL 1918

7TH Nothing fresh to report.

8TH We are enjoying very nice weather. Plenty of sunshine during the day, and fairly cool at nights. I had a good look round a large farm today. The cultivation was very intensive. Almonds, oranges and lemons were the chief products. Between the trees all kinds of garden produce was growing. There were also many acres of grapes.

9TH Long day for me, so did not go anywhere.

10TH Had a walk to Deiran this morning. The farms on the way looked fine.

11TH Am 28 today, but don't feel any older.

12TH Heard from Alf. He is down at base again with malaria.

13TH Quiet day. We are advancing a little up here.

14TH Got drill clothing and helmets today. They are very welcome, because it is getting very hot.

15TH Nothing fresh to report.

16TH Nothing fresh to report.

17TH The news from France seems a little more hopeful. [*This might refer to the establishment of unified allied command under Ferdinand Foch.*]

18TH Feeling fed up with GHQ. We had to carry our beds away today because the C in C was coming round. What a crime it would be if he knew a man had a bed! It is said we are going to have squad drill in the morning. What a game after three years!

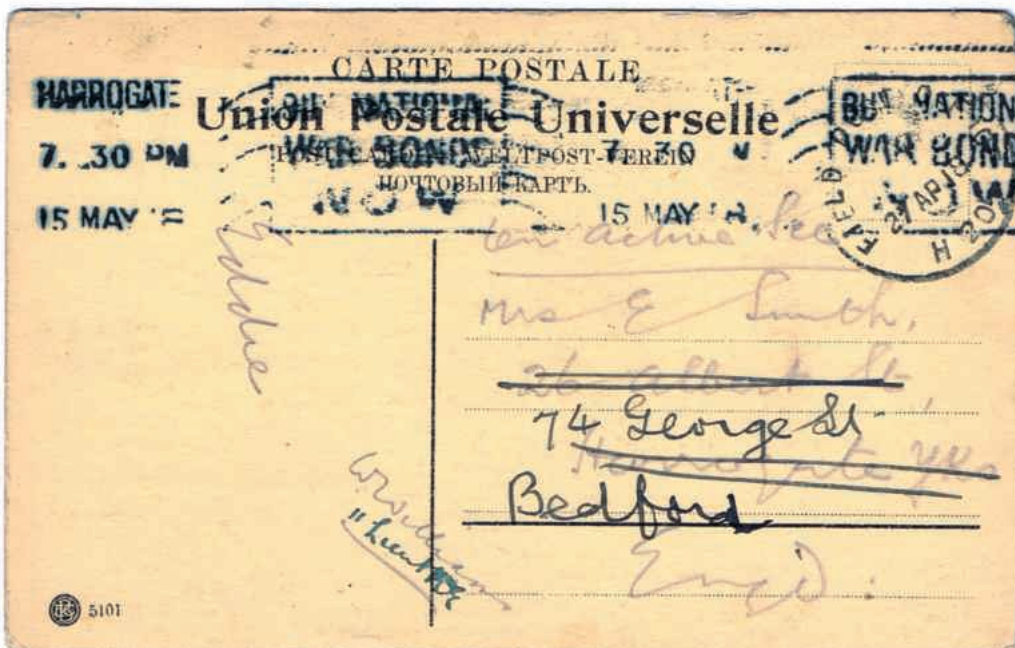
19TH Our people tried to advance today, but had too much opposition.

20TH Very hot today. Spent the morning in the woods.

21ST Very warm today. More hopeful news from France. Am going to Jerusalem in a few days' time.

22ND Am going to Jerusalem tomorrow.

23RD Set off at 1 pm by motor lorry, and had a very interesting but dusty journey. We climbed up and up the mountains. At many places had villages

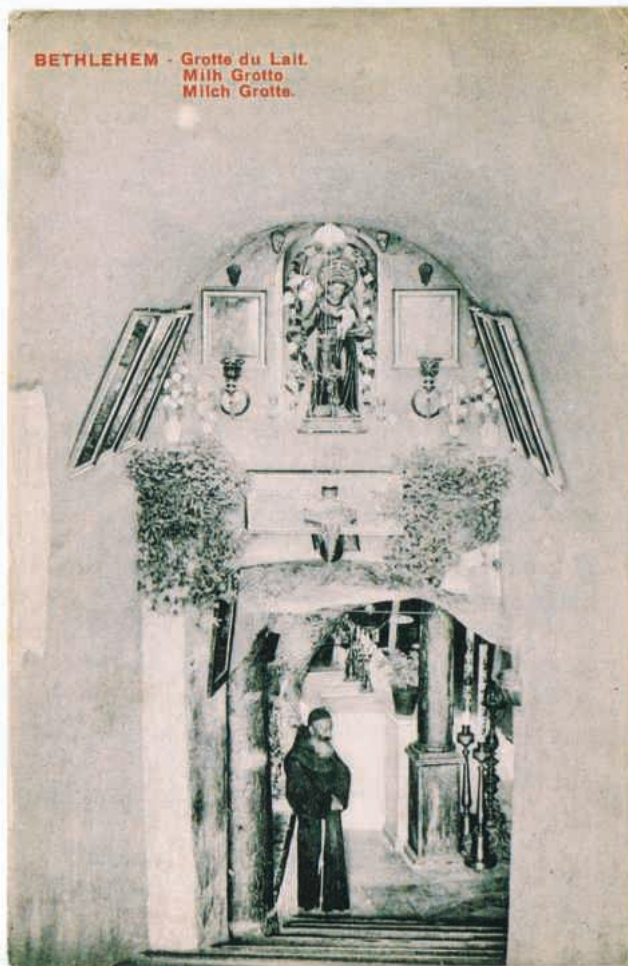


A quick postcard home.

APRIL 1918

lying many hundred feet below. Landed safely despite the many hairpin bends in the road. The Holy City is enclosed by the walls, which are very imposing. We could not get in the city at night, but there is plenty to see outside. The district is rich in stone, and there are many fine churches and other buildings. The Notre Dame de France is an exceptionally fine building. We had a walk round by the Damascus Gate in the evening.

24TH I was not greatly impressed with the billets for our signals at the Turkish PO. I slept on the veranda. It was cool but fresh. At 6.30 am had a stroll round by the Damascus Gate. After breakfast walked to Bethlehem. It is a fine walk through the hills. Bethlehem is a fine stone-built town, and is said to hold about 10,000 Christians. We saw about 900 boys emerging from the Church of the Nativity, where they had been attending service. We purchased some mother of pearl trinkets which the natives were making. There is a fine



Postcard from
Bethlehem.

APRIL 1918

village named Bengalla which is adjacent to Bethlehem. After a little trouble with regard to passes, we went to the Church of the Nativity. It is not exactly an imposing building from the outside and the entrance is through a low door. Inside we first passed through a nave with fine marble columns. Proceeding we came to a recess where there is a brass star which marks the birth place of Christ. A question as to the ownership of this star we were told was the cause of the Crimean War.

We also saw the place where the babes clothes were washed. There were many fine brass lamps, which have been presented by various nationalities. To a certain extent the inside of the Church is a scene of many wrangles between Greek, Armenian and Catholic. Some claim various walls or steps, others hang tapestry over the walls belonging to someone else, and then another party will put pictures on the tapestry.

The pictures are rotting away, because if they are removed, the rights are forfeited. One window cannot be cleaned, because they cannot decide who was the owner. One party put down a carpet to prevent the others from using the door. However the other party cut the carpet one night, and so made a right of way. If they forget to sweep this part for one day, they forfeit the right of way.

Had a look round a German church, which was very nice inside. The German pastor showed us round. Had a look round the French church which appears very gaudy, with tinsel and colours. The Father was a jolly chap. He took us round the monastery, which has accommodated 3,000 soldiers. His own quarters were very nice. I have bought bags of souvenirs made from mother of pearl. Bethlehem is built of good stone, and is the cleanest town I have seen in the East. All the people we met were cheerful and friendly. This has been a red letter day. Went to St George's Club in the evening. Had look in St George's Cathedral. It is very magnificent inside.

25TH Had a very busy time today. Outside the city wall in morning, and inside the wall in afternoon. We set off by seeing the Damascus Gate, then along to Gordon's tomb. [*General Charles George Gordon died in Khartum at the hands of the Mahdi in 1885. He had been a popular hero in Britain.*] There are a few arguments in favour of this Gordon's Tomb but on the whole the other, which is within the city walls, seems to be the accepted one. Solomon's Mines were visited next.

We went about quarter of a mile up a tunnel or cave. Most of the stones for building purposes were quarried here. The German Monastery was pointed out. It is a modern building. We passed Herod's Gate, and viewed the valley of Jehosaphat, the Kaiser's Palace and the Mount of Olives. The city walls,

APRIL 1918

which we skirted were very imposing, and almost impregnable in former days. Next we saw the Russian Ascension place in the distance, and the Russian Gethsemane, which contains the Russian Church with its gilded domes. The Russians have places of their own, so that their pilgrims can patronise their own holy places. We passed St Stephen's Gate, and saw Absalom's Pillar in David's Vale. Saw the Virgin's Tomb. Went round what is supposed to be the proper Gethsemane. Here there are 14 pictures in relief, representing the 14 stations of the cross. Here is the tree under which Jesus prayed for the last time. We began to climb up the Mount of Olives. Soon there was a wonderful view of Jerusalem. We ascended still further to the Ascension place, which is covered by the Mohammedan's Mosque. We got a drink of cool water from a deep well. We climbed still higher to the Russian Belvedere Tower, and saw the Russian Ascension Place.

We climbed up the tower, and from the top had one of the finest views one could ever hope to see. On one side was Jerusalem, and on the other side the Dead Sea and River Jordan, with the mountains of Moab in the distance. The tower is about 3,000 ft above sea level. We also had a good view of Bethany, which is a small village. The morning was very tiring, but exceedingly interesting. The afternoon trip was also conducted by the YMCA. Entered by the Jaffa Gate, which is a fine entrance. There is a fine clock tower here, and the clocks are interesting, because one tells European time, and the other Mohammedan time. Our first trip was into the Armenian Church, which is



APRIL 1918

very old, and is said to date back to the time of St Paul. The interior was finely decorated with porcelain, mother of pearl and tortoise shells. We passed out of the Zion Gate which was the entry to the City of Zion. Here we saw the Armenian Monastery, which is built on the site of Carphus house. At this place, Peter denied Christ. Christ was also imprisoned here during his trial, and a very ancient mosaic pavement has been discovered here. A modern church was pointed out, which was built by the Kaiser, and given to the German Catholics. It marks the spot where the Virgin Mary died. We next visited an old Mohammedan mosque. The ground on which it is built marks the spot where Our Lord's supper took place. David's tomb is also here. We had a view across the valley, and a few interesting places were pointed out, including the Valley of Gehena, the Mount of Evil Counsel, the pool of Siloam, the Mount of Offence and leper settlement. We next passed to the Jews' wailing place. The Jews under Turkish rule are not allowed any property in Jerusalem, but they have the privilege of going to the temple wall to read the scriptures. We saw some old ladies reading and wailing. They were touching and kissing the wall. The walls were studded with nails. Jerusalem pilgrims hammer these nails into the wall, and to a certain extent feel they have property in Jerusalem as long as the nail remains. We now put on cloth slippers to visit the Mosque of Omar. It is a fine building, decorated on the outside with porcelain. The interior is magnificent. In the centre is a large rock where Abraham offered up Isaac. The decorations of mosaic and marble are superb. One needs to see in order to have any idea of its splendour. There are some very fine carpets also. We had a look at the Golden Gates. These are walled up and will reopen at the coming of Our Lord. We saw Solomon's tomb. The windows were hung with strips of clothing left there by pilgrims.

We visited the Church of St Anne, built by the French over the place where the Virgin Mary was born. The church contains some very fine paintings. In recent excavations, they have discovered the pool of Bethseda. It is a great depth and fairly large. The tale of the troubled waters and the lame man is given in about 50 languages, including Esperanto for the benefit of the pilgrims. We passed along where the Via Dolorosa commences. The place where Pilate scourged Christ was pointed out, also the Ecce Homo Arch, where Christ was brought before the people. We proceeded along the Way of Sorrows, and the stations were pointed out. Arriving at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, we spent much time looking at the decorations, which are magnificent. Various bodies of the Christian faith have portions of the Holy Church, which they decorate in their own style. Perhaps some of the decoration would seem gaudy to the Western mind, but the time and money which has been expended on these decorations shows great devotion to the Christian faith. We visited Golgotha and saw the place where the cross stood, also the rent in the rock which is mentioned in the Bible.

APRIL/MAY 1918

There was an image of the Virgin Mary which was loaded with thousands of pounds worth of jewellery left by pilgrims, Legions of Honour and several other medals have been left there. Last of all, we visited the tomb of Christ. The YMCA Secretary gave us a beautiful address prior to our entry. One felt the reverence of the place where millions of pilgrims have visited to pay homage to Christ.

26TH Visited the Kaiser's Palace on the Mount of Olives. It is a magnificent place. The Church is very fine, and has some beautiful decorations. We climbed the tower, and had a fine view of Jerusalem on one side, and the Dead Sea on the other. I sat in the Kaiser's chair. In the afternoon went to see Bill Raynor's grave at Mount Zion.

27TH Was up early, and went by motor to join NB about 12 miles along the Jericho Road. It is a drop of about 3,000 ft. The road is all hairpin bends. The section was moving, so I was soon on the move once more towards Jericho. We moved to a point about three miles off Jericho. We have dropped about 4,000 ft in about 18 miles.

28TH Worked from 6 am till dark, laying lines to Jericho PO. Jericho is a decayed village, and the dustiest, dirtiest place I have ever seen. There are huge spouts of dust rising on all sides.

29TH Commenced work in Jericho Section office. Have had a hard day. We have all Decorps staff here.

30TH Having a busy time, in fact working day and night getting things in order.

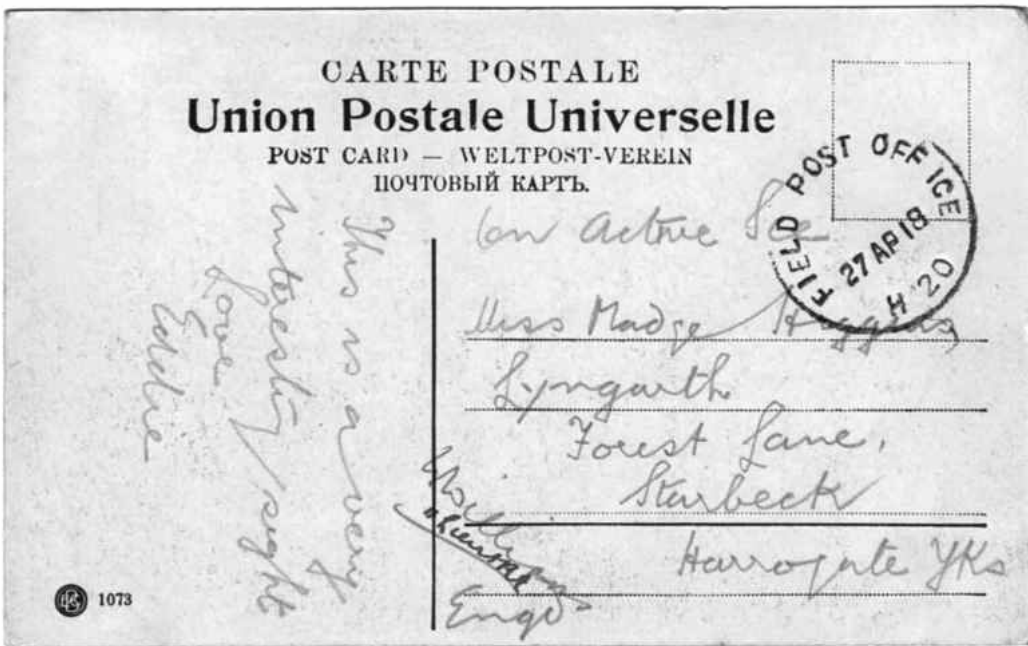
MAY

1ST Still working very hard and have very little leisure.

2ND Got two operators and a linesman up.

3RD Got all the wires straightened, and have spent all morning putting the sanitary arrangements on a decent footing. It has been an awful job. Refuse has been dumped round the place for hundreds of years. I have got an iron bedstead and a straw mattress from a Jordan hotel. Am hoping things will sail along very smoothly now. Lt. Aldshead, our officer, is a very nice chap.

4TH I hear we have lost a few guns up here and are having to leave Salt. There has been any amount of movement down the line. I have one man with a touch of fever, and I have a sore throat, and can hardly speak.



MAY 1918

5TH Two more men feeling sick today. I think this stunt has been a washout, and the Turks have proved too strong for us. We are handing over at noon tomorrow to Lt. Rose.

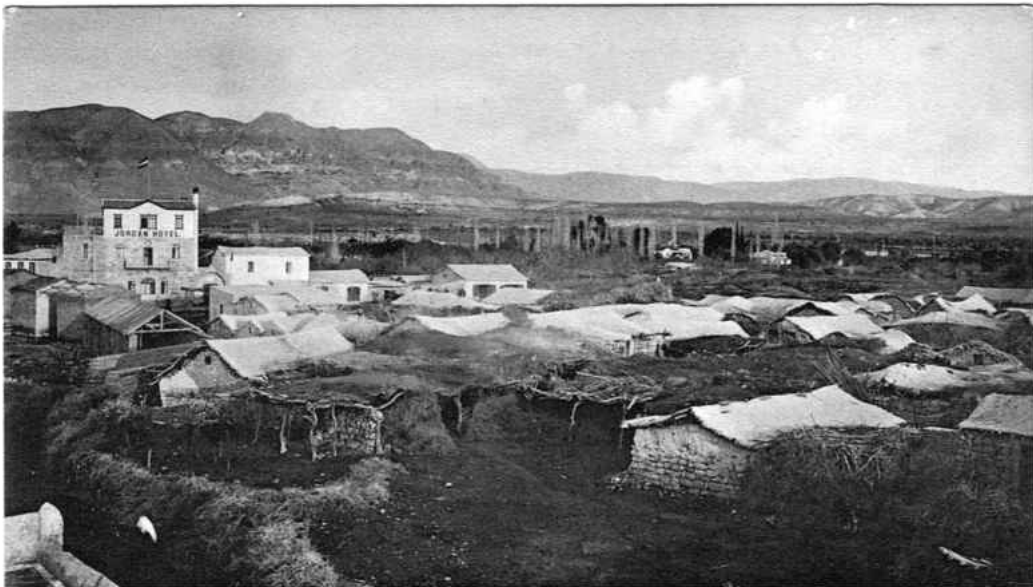
6TH Handed over to Decorps at noon. Came by lorry to Talat ed Dum. We are a good height up in the mountains. My word it is cold. I should say we are about the place where the man who journeyed from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among thieves. It is a wild district. The only signs of vegetation is a little scrub, otherwise one sees nothing but barren stony mountains.

7TH Nothing fresh to report.

8TH Still on the hill having a fairly easy time.

8TH Got on a passing lorry, and went to Jerusalem to buy canteen stores for the section. Went to both canteens, but got very little stuff. Had a walk down to St George's in the evening. Stayed night at Jerusalem.

9TH Came back to camp on a lorry. What a dusty ride! It put me off colour all day. We have all suffered today, owing to the excessive heat and flies, also inadequate shelter from the sun. It is like being in the torments of hell.



JERICO

MAY 1918

10TH Got up with the sun at 5 am. Was perspiring freely at 7 am. Feeling a little better today. Had it exceedingly hot again today. About 4 pm, a south-westerly wind got up, which of course raised the dust, in fact dust and dirt blot out everything. These conditions are awful, but no doubt we shall get a change shortly.

11TH A much cooler day. Am feeling much better in health. Had good long walk in Judean Hills. There was hardly a sign of life. Nothing but steep rocky slopes.

12TH A passable day as regards weather; the place does not improve though. Was on picket at night.

13TH Still hanging on, and doing very little work, thank goodness. There are still no signs of a further attack on Es Salt as yet.

14TH Quiet day. Fairly hot. Received a mail which cheered us up.

15TH Wrote some letters. Am feeling very weak.

16TH Very poorly day. Have been nearly tormented to death by the flies and heat.

17TH Fairly hot day. Still hanging on. Had a look at the ruined Crusaders' Tower which commands the Jerusalem Jericho road. It has been a fine place, many years ago.

18TH Had one of the worst days of my life. Was almost too weak to move about, and we were treated to a dust storm which lasted about six hours.

19TH Had a walk over the mountain in the direction of the Dead Sea. Was able to get a good view of it through some glasses.

20TH Was able to get a few stores from the canteen. I am feeling much better again.

21ST Things are still quiet on this front. Fairly hot day.

22ND Quiet day. On picket at night.

23RD Nothing fresh to report. On picket.

24TH Received a mail. Nothing fresh to report.

MAY/JUNE 1918

25TH Nothing fresh to report.

26TH Still at the same place with the dust, dirt, heat and flies. Harold is poorly today.

27TH Posted a parcel home this morning. Drew rations for section at night.

28TH Feeling more settled down. Going in for a bit more manual work.

29TH Nothing fresh to report. Alf has sent me *Sinai and Palestine* by Dean Stanley, so I have something to read.

30TH Nothing fresh to report.

31ST Am building a bivouac of biscuit tins. It is occupying my time a little. The heat has been very trying, and it nearly kills one to stay in the low bivouacs.

JUNE

1ST Had an awful wind storm last night. It kept us awake for a few hours. Rebuilt the house today with a wall of biscuit tins. It is much cooler, and can be made fairly fly proof. On picket at night.

2ND Nothing fresh to report.

3RD A bit of shelling in the Nablus Section. Fairly decent day with little wind.

4TH There is another reverse in France. I think we must be outnumbered or perhaps out-generaled. However we can only wait and see.

5TH Nothing to report.

6TH The hottest day we have had yet. We have suffered today. Had long walk today over the Wadi Farah, which lies to the north. The wadi was dry until we came to a spring, which gushed out of the ground, making a fairly copious stream. There were fish, frogs and freshwater crabs. It was lovely to follow the stream, which flowed between high cliffs. I had a swim as soon as we found a deep place. I saw three gazelles on the mountains.

7TH Nothing fresh to report. Made an acetylene lamp, which burns without a burner. It is a fine light, and does not blow up.

8TH Made a billy today for cooking. Have been able to get some sugar from the canteen, so will be able to have some stewed fruit.

JUNE 1918

9TH Made a few more alterations to the bivouac today.

10TH Went to Kilo 12 to help dismantle a linesman's post, and transfer it to a place near our camp. We are to take turn at listening in for the telephone ring. Two of our operators, who cannot operate, are being sent down to base, and one who is medium is being sent to Jerusalem for experience.

11TH On picket. Nothing fresh to report.

12TH Busy all day, making an acetylene lamp for a friend.

13TH Finished the lamp today, and it goes well. Received a small mail.

14TH Terribly hot all day. Almost enough to kill anyone.

15TH Have heard Alf has got a job at Cairo in a wireless section. Wish I was down there.

16TH Nothing fresh. Very windy in the evening.

17TH Fairly decent day. The boss has gone to Ramleh today – it is said it is with reference to a move. Completed another lamp today. It does not belong to me, but I have supplied the advice and idea and have done the soldering. Have made a mouse trap, because these creatures keep us awake at night. Mr Mouse will get a shock if he goes near it.

18TH Very windy afternoon and night. Am off down to the test point on the road tomorrow.

19TH Harold Morris and I commenced work at the test point. The tent was falling down, and things running to seed. Spent the day putting things right, and making beds. The job is not too bad, but we have been troubled with mosquitos. Jonnie Turk is shelling Jericho, and most of the people are leaving for Jerusalem.

20TH Having a nice easy time here, but the mosquitos trouble us at night.

21ST Nothing fresh to report.

22ND Have a touch of fever today. Feeling very seedy. Am bit all over with mosquitos.

23RD Feeling better today. We are going to work this test job in 24-hour shifts, owing to the mosquitos.

JUNE/JULY 1918

24TH Fairly cool day. Nothing fresh to report.

25TH Working in camp today. Am going to the test point every other day.

26TH Nothing fresh to report.

27TH Nothing to report.

28TH Have learned the Turks are going to attack here and on the Ludd Section any day.

29TH Working in camp. Very hot day. Nothing fresh to report.

30TH Nothing fresh to report. The Turkish attack has not yet commenced.

JULY

1ST Windy day. I spent a little time with some Bedouins, trying my new Arabic phrase book. They seem to speak half Syrian and half Egyptian Arabic. It is a mix up. I can always make myself understood, but I am aiming at being more fluent.

2ND Worked at the test point today. Nothing to report.

3RD Nothing fresh to report.

4TH Nothing to report.

5TH Nothing to report.

6TH A very windy day. It's been enough to make a chap go over to the Turks.

7TH Sunday. Still windy. Have been choked with dust all day.

8TH Nothing to report.

9TH Got my French and Italian books up, so hope to do a little studying.

10TH Nothing to report.

11TH Nothing to report.

12TH Had a nasty touch of fever.

JULY 1918

13TH Still feeling seedy.

14TH Feeling better today. We are going to live at Jerusalem. It will be a happy change. The Turks have attacked this morning, but we have driven them back with loss, and taken about 600 prisoners.

15TH Nothing to report.

17TH Packed up today, and moved up to Jerusalem at 5 pm. It was a nice journey. I walked the first 11 kilos.

18TH We have got a nice camp. The place seems greatly improved, and no doubt will be a complete change. I had a walk round in the evening.

19TH Fixed phones all day at the American Red Cross. I found the Yankees were very nice people. Many of the doctors were in Turkey at the early stages of the war. The girls seem very sensible, with no nonsense about them. I did not notice the Yankee drawl. In fact they all spoke with expressionless voices. Their way of speaking seems to lack something.

20TH Worked at the Americans' today. Had a walk round the town in the evening. The restaurants are going now, and I was able to get a feed.

21ST Nothing fresh to report.

22ND Had dinner in town. The place seems quite prosperous.

23RD Saw the 'Sparklets' – 20th Corps Signal Concert Troop. A very fine show.

24TH Went sick in morning with sore throat, and got some pills. Fitting telephones all afternoon.

25TH Went to Lena Ashwell's concert at night. A very fine show.

26TH Had friends over from Gaza, so showed them round in the evening.

28TH Had a walk round in the evening.

29TH Heard a lecture on Palestine at the Church Army. It was rather dry.

30TH On picket at night. Have started trying to learn a bit more Arabic from an Egyptian who wants to learn English.

JULY/AUGUST 1918

31ST I seem to be picking up a little Arabic. Reading with the aid of our camp *walads*.

AUGUST

1ST Went with my *walad* to see his father, and had a very interesting evening. The house was fairly large, and we were shown into a room which was spotlessly clean. There were a lot of linen covers, which were snowy white, and after that a feed of fruit, which was no doubt specially selected. It included almonds, green and black grapes, yellow and pink melons, apples and some very fine nectarines. I had a long chat with the old man who did not know any English. The boys with me could not talk much, because they do not trouble to learn Arabic. We finished up with some more coffee, and went home very favourably impressed. The mother did not put in an appearance, as is usual with these people, but she stood outside the door, and occasionally peeped in to look at us, or she put in a word now and again.

2ND Nothing fresh to report.

3RD Nothing fresh to report.

4TH Got half day off, and went round the old city. There was nothing fresh to see, but it was a pleasure to revisit the Holy places.

5TH Nothing fresh to report.

6TH Commenced work at the office. I am not feeling very well, but hope to improve, now that I have got a steady job.

7TH Went round the German Catholic Church, which is just outside the walls. It is a fine building, and the interior decorations of mosaic which have been completed are very fine.

8TH Have got a sore throat, also toothache. It is playing me up very badly.

9TH Went to the doctor. Waited about three hours. He sent me to the dentist. The dentist removed the back tooth without using cocaine. He caused me some pain, and I felt sickly all day.

10TH Not feeling very well.

11TH Still feeling seedy.

12TH Very busy at the office. I have got toothache again.

AUGUST 1918

13TH Carrying on. Nothing fresh to report.

14TH Saw a few old friends who are down for the Feast of the Assumption.

15TH Have a lot of men sick in the section. They all seem to be getting temperatures.

16TH Nothing fresh to report.

17TH Same tale.

18TH Am feeling in better health. Having a fairly decent time. Am getting a little French conversation each day with my Montenegrin friend Christo Djurich.

19TH Nothing to report.

20TH Had a tooth stopped.

21ST Nothing fresh to report.

22ND Visited the Coptic Church. It is very much like an English chapel. The Gospel and Hymn books are in Arabic. Also visited the Abyssinian church. These people are Christians. Their church is full of pictures about the Gospels. The building, which is very fine, is dome-shaped.

23RD L of C will be relieving us shortly. Am sorry because the office is alright.

25TH Nothing fresh to report. I attended a fine concert given by the 'Vagabonds'.

26TH I think there will be a stunt soon. Have had another tooth out today. Am having a little French conversation every day, and seem to be making fair progress.

27TH Went with Christo in the morning to see the festival, which is held each year in honour of the Virgin Mary. I believe it is the anniversary of her death. Unfortunately we arrived too late for the service, but we went into the Virgin's Church and saw all the people. It appears to be jointly owned by Greeks, Copts and Armenians.

28TH Nothing fresh to report.

29TH Went round the Holy City in the morning. It was very interesting, but I did not see anything fresh. In evening went to an organ recital at St John's.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1918

30TH Have had a kind of holiday from the office. L of C have come up.

31ST Finished at the office.

SEPTEMBER

1ST Working on the line. Have got a couple of horses.

2ND Have had a nice ride 5 am to 7 am. Otherwise working hard all day. We are very short-handed.

3RD Nothing fresh to report.

4TH We are going to Ramleh. I am driving. It is a good distance.

5TH Said goodbye to Christo. Was very sorry to leave. Working hard all day packing up. Set off for Ramleh at 5 pm. I was driving in a cable cart. I stuck the ride fairly well. There are some awful hills and hairpin bends. We landed at 6.30 am. I had nearly fallen asleep on the horse just before dawn.

6TH We camped near GHQ on sandy ground. I seem to be riding all day, fetching stores and going to water at night. I knocked my bed together and had a really good sleep.

7TH Had a fairly busy day getting the camp straightened. Reinforcements arrived, so I handed over my horses to a driver.

8TH Fairly busy, but getting settled down.

11TH We are working long hours, and I have got a bad attack of rheumatism. It is giving me some pain. However the doctor does not think it is very serious.

12TH Went out in morning practising airline work. What a game after four years of war.

14TH We are leaving Ramleh for somewhere on the coast tomorrow.

15TH Was out driving all day. We struck camp, but did not move.

16TH Left at 4 pm along with two more cable sections. We passed through one of the best orange districts in the world. We struck north off the Jaffa road, and landed at a place beyond Sorona, which seems fairly near the sea. We are on the north side of the River Auja. I drove wheel in a GS wagon. It was a tedious journey, because of the heavy traffic on the road. Our wagons



Christo Djurich. On the reverse side of the photo are the words 'Souvenir de sincère amitié a Monsieur Georges Edward Smith de Christo Rado Djurich, Jerusalem 4 Septembre 1918'.

Ch. Rado
PHOTOGRAPHE



JERUSALEM
Palestine.

SEPTEMBER 1918

and horses are tucked away under a cactus hedge, and we are bivouacking in an orange grove. Am sorry to say the fruit is not yet ripe.

17TH Had a rest today.

18TH Left at night and landed at Arsuf, which is only a few miles behind the front line.

19TH The bombardment started at 04.30 am, as far as I can make out. Jonnie Turk ran as fast as he could. By 10 am we were crossing the line and laying cable in enemy territory. We saw many traces of the scrap. We got through to WCP by about 9 pm, having laid 14 miles of cable. We went all day without food.

20TH We were up before dawn, and off again after WCP, who had moved. I was dropped at a test point in the village of Kurkur. We used a lot of Turkish permanent line, and got through to WCP by 2 pm. They are about 20 miles from their yesterday's position. I am quids in. I have two linesmen and five cavalrymen. We have put the office in a house which was a Turkish signal office two days ago. I have a spring bed, three tables and six chairs. The three corps have all made fine advances, and Jonnie is out of sight up to the present. It has been a hard stint, but very interesting.

21ST Had a hard day, because they have been sorting out the wires of the Turkish telegraphs. Our people are still advancing, and I hear Nazareth has fallen tonight. It is said we have taken 34,000 prisoners, and much valuable booty. I shall be glad when I can get a move on, because it is a real stunt, and there is much of interest to see.

22ND Fairly quiet day, but I think our people have pushed on. My line will be dropping out soon, and I hear I am going to Arsuf to work with GHQ. Shall be sorry to leave, because we have a real home here.

23RD They have captured Nazareth and Haifa. There are thousands of prisoners passing within a mile of here, but I am confined to office and cannot get to see them. The mayor and several people from Zimarin called today. They wished to find the Commandant, and give him welcome. One of our linesmen brought 11 prisoners up here, and when they had rested, I had a chat with several who could speak Arabic. I also had a talk with a Hindu guard who spoke good French.

24TH Got a test board and a 10-line switchboard in. Am kept going day and night with the wires.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1918

25TH Working hard all day. Nothing to report.

26TH Nothing to report. Had an awful day in the office. Was testing and changing wires all the time. Packed up at night, and took our kit to the main road.

27TH Left soon after dawn in a motor lorry for Nazareth. Passed through Lejjun and El Afuleh. We passed through the Plain of Esdraelon which has mountains on each side, and is very fine from a scenic point of view. El Afuleh is a big railway station. We have passed dozens of captured lorries and other material, also many prisoners. We landed safely at Nazareth, and were installed in German GHQ. I was formerly under the impression that things were slipshod on Jonnie Turk's side. As we neared Nazareth, we saw fine telegraph routes, and I should say there were 150 wires running into this office. All the instruments too are here, and I think many of the telegraphists were captured. There are fine telephone boards, sounders and four Hughes instruments. They have nearly all been smashed. There is enough furniture to furnish a hotel, and if I had room for anything, I could collect many souvenirs. However, I cannot carry them. Had a look round the place, and found it very Eastern, but clean. The bazaar was very interesting.

28TH Had a good look round the building, which has been Lemman von Sanders' HQ. I could have got bags of valuable souvenirs, but could not carry them. I did get a few German military medals, and a Turkish three-year decoration, also a few very decent dictionaries. Left about noon in a Ford car for Tiberias. It was an enjoyable ride, and as soon as the Sea of Galilee appeared, I thought it was one of the best views I have ever seen. The lake is a beautiful blue. We are installed in an office for telegraphy work. It promises to be a good job.

30TH My word, we are busy, and I have hardly a minute to spare. There are dozens of wires coming in, and we are always testing and making changes. I get very little sleep at night, because it is then we clear things up. There are plenty of prisoners about, and I have had a good chat with the Red Crescent man, who works at the hospital. They seem decent chaps. A lot of German motor men are driving captured cars. One boy named Karl is a very decent lad. He is driving a 60 HP Daimler.

[By this date it was plain the Germans had lost the War in Europe, but hostilities had not ceased. It is surprising that German prisoners were already free to drive.]

OCTOBER

2ND We are jogging along, and gradually getting straightened up as regards the lines. Damascus fell at 6 am on 2nd. I was very ill with fever, but some

OCTOBER 1918

quinine has put me right. Cholera has broken out in this town, and there are about 20 cases. One cannot wonder, because it is a vile place. General Allenby stayed the night of the 2nd here. He will be in the official entry of Damascus tomorrow.

3RD Have the DAS and also General Allenby in today. We are getting settled down, but the town is in a very dirty state. In a room underneath our sergeant's office there is marble table which says 'This building is erected in loving memory of Eliza Reid of Belfast, Ireland, by her sisters, 1896'. These people are probably members of the Jewish Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland.

[The surname Reid was of interest to Smith, because his fiancé in Starbeck lived with two maiden aunts called Reid.]

6TH Still jogging along. I think the cholera is on the wane. Nothing fresh to report.

7TH Having a few men go sick with fever. There also seems to be a halt up the line. Hope we can move up soon.

8TH Nothing fresh to report. Have written home, and given all the news of my trip.

9TH Have had a sweltering time. One of our Australian friends has gone into dock with cholera.

10TH The regulations are becoming very strict. All troops but us are clearing out, and we are not allowed to enter the town or go near the sea.

11TH Beirut and Baalbeh have fallen. I hear we are going to make a line Homs to Tripoli and rest on our laurels.

14TH Nothing fresh to report. Unfortunately our rations are not improving, and we are short of some things. People up the line are getting fresh rations, whilst we who are in quarantine are still on iron rations. I have had permission from Milgov to borrow a few books from Dr Torrance's library. There is a fine collection of theological and classical books. They are in an attic piled up and thrown about any way. It is a pity there is no one to take care of them.

15TH Am trying to dip into my books, but hardly know which way to turn. Hope to stay here a while and wade through a few.

OCTOBER 1918

18TH Nothing fresh to report. I believe the country is clear up to Aleppo. There have been some stocks of firearms brought in. I have got a revolver, which may be serviceable. There are hundreds of them but one cannot carry them.

19TH The boss has been mending a car. We had joyride to Afule, which is about 30 miles away. I enjoyed it very much. On return found Harold very bad, and as he has the symptoms of cholera, got the doctor to him. He was taken to Jewish Mission.

20TH Have seen Harold. He is in a tent and doing fine. They assure me he has nothing serious. These Zionist Mission people are Jewish from New York. They are very well trained, and have plenty of money behind them.

22ND Having a very busy time with the lines, but still jogging along.

23RD Having a fairly busy time in the office. Harold is going on fairly well. Have got two new operators straight from Blighty. Have had a terrible wind storm at 4.30 pm.

24TH Had a lot of rain. The Sea of Galilee is very rough. Am having a busy time with the testing, and am having a rough time partly because some of my staff are dopey.

24TH Got rumours of a move. Spirits very high.

28TH Busy clearing up the office for transfer to men of NN Cable Section. We are going to Homs which is about 160 miles north. Our route lies through Damascus. I am going in advance of the section in a Ford with the boss. He is very decent to me, so I hope it keeps fine for us.

29TH Left at 3 pm for Jisr Benat Yakub, where the section has camped. The journey was about 22 miles, over very rough hilly roads.

30TH Up at dawn executing repairs to car. Landed in the afternoon at Kunectra, a journey of about 20 miles. There was a stiff climb, but we finished up on an extensive plateau about 300 feet high. There was Mount Hermon (7,000 ft) a few miles to the west. It is said to be snow-capped, but I could not see any snow. The plateau was well supplied with very cold water. We had a very cold night.

31ST Up at dawn and off to Sasa, 20 miles on the plateau. It was quite wintry, flying along in the early morning. I was chilled through, and as much as I have longed to be cold, I did not find it comfortable. Landed at Sasa, which

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 1918

is a kind of group of houses with a wall round for defence purposes. We dropped a lot of gear at Sasa, and made for Damascus, doing the journey of 20 miles in an hour. I did not get a proper look round the city, but what I saw was very decent. There are some fine buildings, and fairly decent streets. The place has running water all over. The Hedjaz troops are in charge of the place for the present. There are a few old trams running in the streets. We returned to Sasa and camped with section.

NOVEMBER

1ST Up at dawn and away to Damascus again. Plain of Damascus contains 128 square miles, 106 villages, 60 square miles of vineyards and orchards. From Jebel Kasiun, Abraham received divine revelation nearly 4,000 years ago. Did not get a look round, as the place is out of bounds.

2ND Despite the place being out of bounds and the Hedjaz troops ruling the town, I sallied forth to have a look round Damascus. I would have felt safer with a revolver. One can hardly describe the place. Fine buildings on the one hand, and squalid dirty streets on the other. Even electric light and trams in parts. Water fountains and troughs all over the place. As for the people, it is a kind of meeting place for all kinds of Eastern people. There are thousands of Hedjaz troops dressed in German uniforms, and armed to the teeth. All kinds of Bedouins, Arabs, Jews and Turks. It is the most wonderful place I have ever seen.

3RD Moved off after breakfast. Had a fairly stiff climb, and stayed the night at a spot named Khan Mezeilun. We are going to Homs by the western road. Very cold night. We were about 3,000 feet above sea level.

4TH Started to rain at 4 am, so we packed up and left at 5.20 am. There was a fairly stiff climb to over 4,000 feet. Then we had a good coast down the hills, passing through the clouds. We stopped at Bar Elias, and had a good breakfast. Off again to Sardenail, which is a railway station, and one of our test points. I bought potatoes and wine here. It is a fine rich plateau, and is said to extend to Homs. I saw Mount of Lebanon become covered with snow in the distance, but it kept fine for us. Three men arrived from England in the afternoon. The driver of the motor arrived, so I got the sack and had to continue with the wagons.

5TH Up at 4 am, and off with the section. I walked a long way to warm myself. We have the Lebanon range on our left and anti-Lebanon on the right. Arrived at Baalbek at night. It is a decent village and has some fine ruins, which may be Roman.

Eddie with
local people.



NOVEMBER 1918

6TH Off again just as it broke light. Landed at a village called Lebwe. I went into the village after dark and bought some eggs.

7TH Up at dawn and on the trek again. Established a test post at Ras Baalbek station. The enemy has burned a lot of the buildings, and there are heaps of smouldering rubbish. The Turks had abandoned a lot of motors here. Stayed at Surain for the night.

8TH Off to Homs, about 22 miles. Landed late in the afternoon, and camped about a mile north of the town. It is a place of over 50,000 inhabitants, and is typically Arab. There are fine bazaars of the Eastern type. I noticed a huge fortress rock which stands at the entrance. There is a fine mosque somewhat like the Citadel at Cairo. Up to present, I have not had a good look round the place. Speaking of the trek, it was noticeable that hundreds of animals had dropped on the way. The Sheriff of Mecca's forces are everywhere, galloping about, and many of the villages are wild with excitement, expecting his arrival. The people are all carrying Turkish firearms. However, as much as they are eager for the Sheriff, they are not hostile to us. They fire volleys of welcome as we pass through. I shall be sorry to see this district handed over to the Hedjaz people. My knowledge of Syrian Arabic has been very useful. I seem to be the only one who has been able to grasp the new dialect.

9TH It has been very cold for the last few days, and is still cold here. We pitched tents this morning, and I drew rations from 5th Brigade.

10TH Up at 5 am and off to other side of town in a motor. Took a motor trolley on the railway, and went down the line on a fault. The boss was driving. It was a lovely ride, and at times we did 25 miles an hour. There were a few broken bridges &c, where we had to drag the machine over land. Went 76 kilos south of Homs, and after putting the broken lines through, returned to Homs. We came back like an express train. It has been an enjoyable day. The wind has been very cold, and has blown right through me, but I feel in the pink.

11TH Went through the town in the morning for rations. It is a busy place during the day.

12TH Still jogging along. The town is out of bounds, so we cannot get into it. Our rations are very poor.

13TH Nothing fresh to report. We hear that the armistice has been signed in France.

14TH Nothing fresh to report. Doing very little work. Have got plenty of books, so am OK.

NOVEMBER 1918

20TH Got orders to go on the motor trolley on the railway to replace the lines. Been up and down the lines a few times between Baalbek and Homs. There was snow on the Lebanon range, and the air was fine. We worked hard, but had plenty of pleasure. We had our rations, but generally put up at one of the test posts for the night. I have found men who speak Yankee, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, French and Arabic. I have been in many villages, and had a really interesting time. The distance we were patrolling was 103 kilos. We finished up at Ras Baalbek with a broken magneto. The train towed us to Horns, a distance of 60 kilos. I was sitting on the front holding the tow rope, and at times we did 50 kilos an hour. Landed at Homs, and found the section was in a decent house. I got nicely settled down.

21ST Got nicely settled down. Have got an iron bedstead. Had a trip round Homs to buy some vegetables. The market is a series of arcades, and in it one finds all kinds of merchandise. There are numerous shops full of tempting sweetmeats, and other kinds of Eastern foodstuffs. I looked into a silk merchant's shop, and found a few men sat round a counter counting out piles of gold and notes.

22ND Went to Hama, 40 miles north of Homs, to collect some instruments. It was an awful road, in places almost impassable. Some of the villages en route were very unique, and had the appearance of a camp, because the houses were the shape of bell tents. Hama is a busy city of about 50,000 inhabitants. There are some fine water wheels about, 80 ft in diameter. They are driven by the undercurrent of the river, and they raise water in small boxes, and shoot it onto a high viaduct. The train arrived for Aleppo with a lot of our boys who have been prisoners in Turkey. They were glad to get back. Many of them seemed shaky, and there is no doubt there has been some hardship. Various tales were told but, of course, the fact that they have come through shows that a strong man has stood a chance with the Turks.

23RD Arrived at Homs about noon after a bumpy journey.

24TH Had an interesting day. Made an inspection of the bazaar. It is a wonderful place, but very dirty. I bought some silk from a silk merchant. The silk comes from the Lebanon district, but is locally woven here. Some fellows say it is good, and others say it is not worth much. However, I will send it home.

25TH Went out by lorry about 40 miles on the Tripoli road, to salvage a lorry which had stuck. It is a dreary mountainous country, and the bad roads nearly killed me. Stayed the night. Fortunately, someone had saved the lorry.

26TH Returned to Homs.

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1918

28TH Nothing fresh to report. Received winter clothing.

29TH Had a trip to Hama in the lorry to collect some insulators. Enjoyed the ride, and had good company in the driver. Stayed the night.

29TH Returned to Homs.

30TH Started work on our wireless.

DECEMBER

1ST Having an easy time. We have a very powerful receiving station. It is possible to hear English, German and French stations.

3RD Doing a bit of work on wireless. Nothing fresh to report.

4TH Nothing fresh to report. I am having a fairly interesting time on wireless.

7TH Nothing fresh. The rainy season has commenced, and it is raining cats and dogs.

8TH Went to catch 7 am train for Baalbek. Had to hang about in the rain until 2 pm. Had a very uncomfortable ride in an open truck. I don't remember being so cold before. Stayed the night in Baalbek.

9TH Returned to Homs in General Allenby's train. He seems a nice fellow, and appears to take a great interest in everything he saw. It is fine now and the ground is drying up.

10TH Out at Tel Beise (10 miles north of Homs) carting some poles. Nothing has been heard yet about going home.

11TH Had a walk in the market in afternoon.

13TH Nothing fresh to report. Have been in the bazaar each afternoon, and find it very interesting.

14TH Set off on the 7 am train to go to Damascus for some stores. It was raining and cold. Landed at Rayak junction about 2 pm and left at 10 pm.

15TH Arrived at Damascus at 4 am, and had a tramp of a mile through the rain and mud. It rained all day, and I have never seen so much mud. However it was my only chance of seeing the bazaar, so I had a good look round. It was all very interesting, but I did not see any article really worth buying.

DECEMBER 1918

16TH Left Damascus at 9 am, and passed through some beautiful scenery. There were some very rugged mountains, belts of trees and waterfalls. Arrived at Rayak Junction at 7.30pm, and slept in the station buildings. Rayak is a very big junction, but all the works have been destroyed by our bombs and also the Germans when they left. It is a miserable place.

17TH Left Rayak at 8.30 am and arrived at Homs at about 1.30 pm. What a game it has been lifting stores about and changing trains. However, I like travelling, despite the hardships.

18TH Nothing fresh to report. I have contracted a cold as a result of my trip.

23RD Nothing fresh to report. Have had a good look round every day and have practically seen all there is to see.

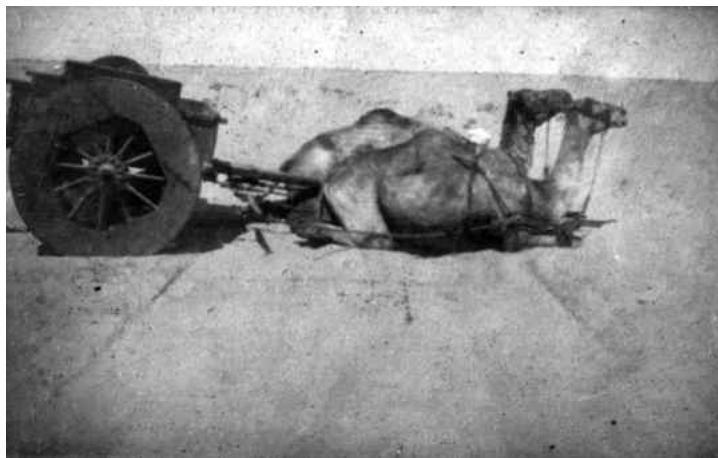
24TH Set off for Rayak to bring up Christmas stores. Very cold travelling. Had to sleep in the truck all night in order to watch the stores. It was a white frost, so I got very little sleep owing to the cold.

25TH Returned to Homs with the swag, which weighed about a ton. We had a fairly decent dinner, and the billet got fairly rowdy towards evening. I was very tired and went to bed early.

28TH Nothing to report. Having fairly decent dry weather.

31ST Nothing fresh to report. Roll on Blighty.

Camels with
cable cart.





1919

JANUARY

2ND Had a quiet New Year. The weather is cold, but keeps fairly fine.

FEBRUARY

2ND Went down to Tul Keram to bring up our dump. The journey took us three days. Had four days at Tul Keram and found the weather very mild. The mosquitos caught me, and I caught malaria, but fortunately it did not last long. I got the dump trucked, and went as far as Haifa, where it was shipped to narrow gauge rail. The rail was blocked, and I was kept at Haifa for a week. It is a decent town. Went on to Semakh, which is at the south end of Galilee. They kept me here 11 days. The weather was warm, and I had a fairly nice time. Left for Damascus, and had two days there. I was shunted into four different railway stations. Went on to Rayak where it was raining. The next day it snowed very hard. The last lap of the 130 kilos was in an open truck. Found our people in a new billet at Homs.

3RD We are running Homs signal office and I am a superintendent. We are very busy, working 12 hours a day. Frankie went home yesterday. They tell me my name has come through to GHQ, but the boss has heard nothing.

4TH My name came through for demob, but it was cancelled before I got away. Such is life.

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1919

8TH Having a busy time in the office with lines that keep flopping. Had a nasty day with malaria, and had to stay in bed. Feeling better again.

25TH Still no news of demob, although my immediate release form has come through from the War Office. I have applied for compassionate leave, so that may help things on. Have just had four days at Aleppo. It is a fine Arab city. There are many mosques and a big defence hill with a ruined castle. The shops are packed with cheap Austrian and German goods, and everything is very expensive. I was asked £10 for a small Persian carpet. There is a big attitude of indifference amongst the merchants. They are in no way eager to sell anything, and in many cases, if they cannot change a note, they put the goods back and relapse in a drowsy mood. I saw an Arabic play, also one in Classical Arabic. There was also a historical Armenian play. On the whole the place was very interesting.

26TH Got my ticket today. Am going down line on 28th.

MARCH

3RD Set off south and had a very rough ride to Ramleh GHQ. It is a shame, but we have had to fight our way onto the trains because they are so crowded. There are no arrangements for feeding at any place on the way.

4TH Had a day's rest at GHQ. It rained all day.

6TH Arrived at Kantara after rather a tiring journey. The camp holds thousands of troops, but things are fairly well organised. We had been told to expect a rough time here, but conditions are not at all bad. My luck is in. I leave on Sunday for embarkation on the *Caledonia*.

9TH Had a very tiring march to the station, where we took a train for Port Said. We were crowded, but the journey only occupied an hour. Got aboard the *Caledonia* after many delays. The way we are herded and messed about is enough to break a fellow's heart. The boat was not a bad vessel, but most of it was set apart for a few officers on board. The mess deck where I was allotted was down two flights of stairs. There was no ventilation apart from the stairway. When all were seated, it was like the Black Hole of Calcutta, and we were expected to sleep in the same place also. Most of us slept on deck, but it rained twice and we got wet through. Our ship was delayed a day by going round to Malta to drop three Egyptian prisoners, including Jaglul Pasha.

14TH Arrived at Taranto, Italy. The bay is a fine piece of water and the harbour, which is further inland is also very fine. The town looks all right from

MARCH 1919

the bay. The houses are white and seem well built. We left the boat, and took up our quarters about three miles from the town. Saw a train leave. They are packed 30 to a truck.

[This was the last entry in Smith's diary. We know, however, that he did get back safely to England, and married Madge Higgins. They had two children, a girl and a boy. He returned to his work in the Post Office where he had a successful career, rising to be Regional Training Officer for the Midlands Region. In the Second World War he served in the Home Guard with the rank of lieutenant, again specialising in signals.]



