

IE TCD MS 10853

Diary of William Raws, rifleman

folio i verso

With the Writer's Compliments to Sister M. Proctor, in the hope that she may be interested to read of events which happened to one of her most grateful patients, and also the reasons why he is grateful.

folio ii recto

MI. Keating

A DIARY OF THE EVENTS

IN

MY LIFE IN THE ARMY

SEPTEMBER 1ST. – 1914.

MARCH. 11TH – 1916.

BY

WILLIAM RAWES

Late Rifleman.

1st. 6th (Rifle) Bn 5th Kings.

Liverpool Regiment.

folio iii recto

P R E F A C E.

My first thought in writing a full diary of my experience in Training, on Active Service and in Hospital was simply to preserve a personal record of these happenings. However, some few friends read my first attempt and were kind enough to say it was interesting, so I decided to revise the matter and have a few copies taken. The book cannot be very interesting except to my personal friends or the friends of any of my Comrades in the Regiment, but at any rate it portrays fairly clearly I hope what happened to one of the many thousand men who left their civil occupations at the first call when enthusiasm was great and tribunals and group systems were not invented. It has been a pleasure setting down on paper the happy memories of the last two years.

August 15th 1916.

William Raws

folio iv recto

CHAPTERS.

1. Joining.
2. Training in Sefton Park.
3. Guarding the railway at Croydon.
4. Training at Sevenoaks.
5. Training at Canterbury.
6. Final Leave Home.
7. On Active Service.
8. Hospital Life in France.
9. Hospital Life in Dublin.
10. Hospital Life in Birkenhead.
11. Home.

folio 1 recto

JOINING. SEPT. 1ST 1914.

A month elapsed after the outbreak of the War before I realized that it was my duty to join the Army, for, to take such a step was against all my inclinations and upbringing.

I decided to join on Saturday, Aug. 29th. My first thoughts were in favour of joining the Pals Battalion but as Ben and Bob had both joined the 6th (Rifles) Kings Liverpool Regt. I decided to do likewise.

At my first attempt I was turned down because of my eyesight, but on my presenting myself in the evening of the same day, wearing spectacles, I was duly sworn in at 8 p.m.

I signed on for four years foreign service if necessary, and I became one of the 240 men who were to join the 1st Battalion to bring it up to the strength for Foreign Service. The minimum height when I joined was 5'9" and the 240

folio 2 recto

[1914] recruits were a splendid lot of men.

To my mind they were the pick of the Battalion and up to June 1916 all the honours which fell to the lot of the 6th. viz:- 3 D.C.M's and one Military Cross were awarded to three men and one officer of this draft.

My number was 2235 and I assigned to F Company and as Ben and Bob were in the same lot we were very glad things had fallen as they had done.

folio 3 recto

[1914] TRAINING IN SEFTON PARK.

AND LIVERPOOL.

The day after joining we started our training from 10 – 12 in the morning and 2.20 – 4.30. The drills soon got very monotonous but taking it on the whole we enjoyed ourselves and the hearty dinners we used to have in Park Road after the morning's work are things to be remembered, to say nothing of the kindness we met with from the lady who ran the shop, Miss Barnard. The instructor in the Swedish Drill was Sergeant Kelly and he was a very smart N.C.O. and a decent fellow. We had quite a few route marches. The first was through the Park and round Mossley Hill district.

It was on Sept 18th. that I first put on the King's Uniform and on the same day I was

folio 4 recto

[1914] re-examined with all the other boys by the Doctor and passed for foreign service.

On Sept. 20th, we had a route march to Hoylake and this was a splendid day and well worth remembering. We crossed the river to Birkenhead and set off via Bidston. Halting in Moreton Village, we had our "morning beer" as Captain Temple put it and then got moving again and marched on to Hoylake and then formed up before the Royal Liverpool Golf House. Here we were split up into small parties to be entertained for lunch and I was one of the eight taken to the house of H.A.H. Rathbone who did us very well indeed. After lunch a picked party of men performed Swedish Exercises for the edification of the good people of Hoylake on the Green in front of the Golf House and thanks to the way Mr. Rathbone had

folio 5 recto

[1914] looked after us I was very thankful I was not one of those chosen to perform. Soon after, headed by the village Band we marched on through West Kirby and back through Frankby, Greasby and Upton and were dismissed at Birkenhead by Captain Temple. I had thoroughly enjoyed myself but the 20 mile march was quite sufficient to tire me out. Drill continued the next week, and on one afternoon Captain Temple sitting perched on the top rail of a plantation surrounding in the Park, read us a Military Lecture and gave us many words of advice. We thought a lot of this Officer, and found when we joined the Battalion, that, without doubt he was the most popular officer of all. We went to Allerton Park for drill the following Friday and had a good time there practising an attack under Lieut. Broad and having a good game of football after"

folio 6 recto

[1914] eating our lunch which we had taken with us. Another route march took place the following day to Halewood when we were entertained by Mr. Mitchell of Sunday School fame. This 18 mile march tried us somewhat and I got some little experience of sore feet that day and learnt never to bind my puttees too tightly. Wednesday the 30th. we had some outpost work at Childwal[[]] when a

selected few tried to break through our patrol lines. One or two succeeded I believe but as our sections were in reserve we spent a pleasant afternoon smoking and eating apples.

This period of training came suddenly and somewhat dramatically to an end. On the 3rd October we went on a route march to Arrow Hall, 240 of us in Khaki and about the same number of the 2nd Batt. in mufti, and a telegram came to Captain Temple by taxi and he read it to us 240, that we were to join the Battalion at

folio 7 recto

[1914] Redhill on the following Monday. This news was received with cheers. We went back early and paraded for Kit bags at the Landing Stage. On Sunday there was an 11 o.c. parade when we received our identification discs and were warned for a 10.30 p.m. parade. So after many goodbyes we turned up with full kitbags at this hour having neither rifles nor equipment. The march from Warwick St. to Lime St. followed as we were by many friends and relatives of the boys and sundry others will remain in my mind for a long time. We entrained for Redhill at 11.45 and Ben, Bob and I managed to get into the same carriage and also to procure a bottle of lemonade each. The journey was a long one but eventually we arrived at this pretty Surrey town and we were met at 6 a.m. by the splendid bugle band of the first Batt. which completely put in the shade the one we had left behind in

folio 8 recto

[1914] Liverpool. We marched to Headquarters, were inspected by the C.O. and Adj. and in the afternoon were sent to our various posts and for the first and last time till I was wounded Ben [and] I were separated. He went to Sydenham, I and Bob to Croydon.

folio 9 recto

[1914] GUARDING THE RAILWAY AT CROYDON.

George Barnes was also with Bob and I at Croydon and we very soon were instructed in our new duties which were, to guard the waiting rooms where we lived and where rifles and ammunition were kept, and to guard the bridge just outside the station.

This line was in direct communication with Southampton and many trains passed through with ammunition and provisions for France. The duties were supposed to be 2 hours on and 4 off but it often turned out to be 2 on and 8 or 10 off.

We [we]re allowed to go into town in [the] evenings if we were not on duty and Bob and George and I used to go and get a good meal at the A.B.C. now and then.

Rations were fairly good and we could always be sure of getting a good meal at [the]

folio 10 recto

[1914] railwaymen's eating house on the platform. In the mornings we used to have rifle exercise under Sergt. Wilcox. I was vaccinated after a few days and ten days later had quite a bad arm with it. On Saturdays we used to go and see Croyden Common F.C. playing as their ground was only about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile up the line.

I [m]et Leslie Chester one day when he came to our domicile to be vaccinated. He looked well and was in the best of spirits, though somewhat grimy, as indeed were all the boys who were stationed here, through the smoke and coal dust from the passing trains.

Oct 9th. Friday. Thirty one German prisoners passed through the station with a lot of our men invalided home. Had a chat to some of the latter and contrary to newspaper talk none of them evinced any desire to return to France, being fed

folio 11 recto

[1914] up with life.

Bob's brother Harold came to see him from London and we three went and had tea at the A.B.C. together.

On Oct. 10th. we heard that Antwerp had fallen.

Next day being Sunday, Rees, George, the Corporal, and I went to the Presbyterian Church in Croydon, and there made the acquaintance of the minister's wife Mrs. Crombie, who invited us to go up to tea, and desiring a change from the waiting room fare, we went and enjoyed ourselves very much. I might mention here that I kept up a correspondence with this good lady, and received many gifts from her especially when I was in Dublin.

In the evening of the same day I went to hear the Rev. Major Scott preach who used to be at Rake Lane, and after the service went and had a chat with him.

folio 12 recto

[1914] It's a fine church and he's a fine preacher. Guarding the bridge was no joke for there was plenty of traffic and with the effects of the vaccination beginning to appear it was very trying being on duty there at night time. So when we heard we were going to be moved I for one was not sorry."

folio 13 recto

[1914] TRAINING AT SEVENOAKS.

On Sunday Oct. 18th, we left Croyden and finally arrived at Sevenoaks in Kent. (From letter) "Was thankful to find I had had a bit of luck again for whereas many fellows were billeted in empty houses with nobody to cook for them, we had lovely quarters with a young married couple and their child. Mr. & Mrs. Marsh of 17, St. Botolph's Ave." My billet companion was young Harwood who was quite a good sort and did a very good share of the necessary work such as obtaining rations etc. Some of our fellows were in very fine houses but we were very contended and soon got on the best of terms with our hosts. I had a good deal of trouble with my arm which had been vaccinated and it

swelled right to the fingers, but hot boracic formentations proved a blessing and it soon became normal again.

folio 14 recto

[1914] Of course we met the boys again, and Ben had a comfortable billet close by and so had Bob.

Oct 20th. Tuesday. (From letter).

“Grand route march led by our tip-top Bugle Band. The country round about was absolutely beautiful – narrow lanes, tall trees and beautiful autumn foliage and as we marched we had plenty of singing”.

The route marches at Sevenoaks were splendid and unforgettable. We were all in the best of health and spirits and all of us were happy in the possession of these and in the knowledge that we were doing our duty and would soon be in France. We used to march to Seal Park about 6 miles away and after having a good rest, munching apples and chestnuts which were given us by the gardeners, we would drill for an hour or so and then march back in a different way. We often had afternoons off when we played football and in the

folio 15 recto

[1914] evenings we sometimes went to the little picture house the village possessed but more often we stayed in and had a quiet game of whist with Mr & Mrs Marsh.

Our rations were good and together with the parcels I and Harwood received from home and the extras from Mrs M. we lived well. We drilled in Lord Sackville’s “Knowle Park” on several occasions, and were inspected there by the Brigadier. I was thankful on that occasion that my rifle was spick and span for it was inspected by one of the Staff, and as I was the only one in the Company inspected I was lucky to say the least of it. The next man to me said his was filthy.

Some of our fellows including Harwood were inoculated here, but I escaped that for the time being. One evening I rung up on the telephone to mother and it was very enjoyable speaking

folio 16 recto

[1914] to them all again. Their voices were very clear although they were some 250 miles away. This pleasure cost me 2/9 for six minutes.

After an all too short stay of eleven days we left Sevenoaks parting with regret from our good friends the Marshes and entrained for Canterbury at 5.45 Oct. 29th.

folio 17 recto

[1914] TRAINING AT CANTERBURY

We arrived in pouring rain and after much delay were billeted in 14, Seymour Place off Wincheap and our hosts were Mr. & Mrs. Colbran. Harwood was very disgusted that we were separated but

there was no help for it, and my billet companion became Stanley Rowlands. We found ourselves in very comfortable quarters here – everything clean and tidy, cooking excellent, in fact so enjoyable was this period of training that I will quote at length from letters sent home in the form of diary sheets so that in after life I will forget nothing that happened in the happy days spent at Canterbury.

Oct 30th. Glad to have slept between sheets again for we only had our Army blankets at Marshes. Went out for rations and did well getting bacon, bread, Nestle's milk, tea, sugar, and cheese – dinner would come along

folio 18 recto

[1914] later. First parade 10.30, 6 mile route march on the Chartham Low Road and back to dinner at 12. The deficiency in the dinner allowance was made up by Mrs. C. and we arranged to pay her 2/6 each week extra. We had some very tiring squad drill under Cpt. Bob Hall whom I thought a rotter then but altered my opinion afterwards. We got paid that afternoon and drawing 23/- which covered some arrears and kit money Stan and I bought some extras and celebrated the occasion at No. 14 with our very good friends who we were getting to like very much.

Oct. 31st Saturday.

Parades 9.15 and 2.15.

Succeeded in gathering my mess tin full of mushrooms when we were resting between the drills in the morning and they made a nice stew for the two of us for tea. Stan and I walked down town afterwards with the idea

folio 19 recto

[1914] of getting a bath but as we did not like the idea of one of the places we saw we booked one at the Y.M.C.A. for the following day. Ben wasn't so particular, but had one in that filthy place behind the market.

We walked into a Y.M.C.A. after pretty well full of soldiers and I enjoyed a play on the grand piano there and got back after in time for roll call at 9.30.

Nov. 1st Sunday.

No Church parade.

George Barnes, Stan and I went to the Soldiers service in the Cathedral which is a very ancient and beautiful place as all the world knows.

In the evening Ben, Bob, Stan, Robbie and I went to the Wesleyan Church and enjoyed the service better than the one in the morning, at the Cathedral.

Nov. 2nd Monday.

Things are stiffening.

folio 20 recto

[1914] 1st. Parade 7 – 7.45 Running and Swedish Drill. 9 – 12.15 Company Drill or Route march. Afternoon, Musketry March 2 – 4.30. Lecture 6 – 7.30 (twice a week), and roll call at 9.15.

Nov. 3rd. Outpost duty up Hollow Lane way. We had a scare in the afternoon and thought we were going to be moved again. Nothing came of it however, and although we were told to sleep fully clothed and Stan and I slept in the kitchen we were not disturbed.

Nov 4th. Physical drill on the march behind the Woodman's Arms in fog and wet. Got back with huge appetites to breakfast which was waiting for us consisting of sausage, bacon, 4 cups of tea, Jam and cheese etc. Stan and I were by this time thoroughly comfortable at Seymour Place and very happy together for he was a good companion. Lieut. Tyson joined the Batt. from Blackpool

folio 21 recto

[1914] and we were all very glad for he's a good chap and a good officer and instead of formally returning a salute would say "Good morning Raws or Good morning Austin". For we knew him in Liverpool and were in his section when he was a L/C Corporal awaiting his commission. We heard that the scare the previous day was due to a naval engagement off the East Coast and if the Germans had got through we should have had to go and turn them back. Easy job for the 6th!

In the afternoon I was inoculated – a painless operation. Received a parcel from Mother containing Galantine, shrimps and socks. The former proved a very acceptable addition to our larder. Shoulder a bit stiff after inoculation next day. Orders came that we had to turn out on parade but as we were entitled to 48 hours rest

folio 22 recto

[1914] after this little item I wouldn't turn out as I hadn't received the order from an officer. The other boys including Stan did, but went on Parade with their equipment half on and half off, when told that those who felt bad could fall out they all fell out. Having now proved our unfitness for duty Stan and I went round the town to the Cathedral. This we "did" thoroughly, taking 1 ½ hours with a guide, to get round this most interesting edifice. The oldest parts date back to the days before the Normans came 495 A.D. We saw the place where Becket was murdered, heard the 'orrid story in vivid "guide like" detail and thought Henry II deserved a place next to Charles Peace in Mdmé Taussand and also the knights that did the dirty work.

Saw also the tomb of the Black Prince his helmet, sword and gloves. I note

folio 23 recto

[1914] they did not wear puttees in those days.

The Cathedral contains a dozen or so chapels and all in a state of good repair. Everything was most interesting to us both.

Thursday Nov. 5th. In the afternoon, George Stan, Bob and I climbed one of the towers of the Cathedral, 276 steps up and the same number down. Got a splendid view from the TOP. Kit examined by Lieut. Tyson and afte[r] that we spent a quiet time with the old folks.

Nov. 6th. On Q. Master's fatigue.

Had a nice day cutting up meat most of the time. I started at 6.20 and didn't finish until 8.30. Stan, Ben, George and Bob all went to Sandwich to fire their course and I was left alone because I was on this fatigue.

Sunday Nov. 8th. Went a stroll through the hop fields with Mr. Colbran down by Hollow and went to Wesleyan at night with Robbie.

folio 24 recto

[1914] My vaccinated arm gave me some trouble at this time and I had to get it examined by the M.O.

On parade as usual next day. Manoeuvres near Hollow Lane, lost 9 or 10/- out of my purse during a sham attack.

We were warned to sleep clothed but Stan and I went to bed and took our boots and puttees off. We were alarmed however, but after parading to the orderly room we came home at 2 a.m. again.

On ration party this week and I generally took potatoes or meat round with Leslie Chester. The rations were not very good neither were the remarks the various landladies passed upon them.

Nov. 10th. After lecture in the evening we had a sing song in the old hut turned into a Y.M.C.A. and I officiated at the piano.

folio 25 recto

[1914] Nov 11th. Sham attack of B and D Companies over 1,400 yds. of land but after going 700 yds. owing to a mistake of our Captains we were all wiped out with a machine gun so we were dead for the time being and we had a good smoke and a snooze till it was time for us to go back. Only 22 of our company was on parade in these days many being at Ramsgate & Sandwich.

Thursday Nov 12th. Marched 4 ½ miles down the Dover Road and then splitting up into two parties we returned across country. I was in Captain Westby's and Srgt. Wilcox's party and we got back first. Drill in the afternoon and a lecture at night.

Friday 13th. Another manoeuvre over ploughed fields. Got in a beastly mess. No afternoon parade except for pay and spent the rest of the time scraping and cleaning myself. Got a new uniform in the afternoon also.

folio 26 recto

[1914] Expecting Father and Mother down on Saturday so got Lieut. Dobell to fix up with Colour Sergt. that I should have no duty of any sort on Sunday.

Nov 14th.

More manoeuvres and bayonet drills. Met Father and Mother at Canterbury West Station and they came to Colbrans for tea, and we had a good talk afterwards.

Sunday. Had a nice afternoon with the folks who left early the following morning.

Monday. Marched 5 miles and then split up in 4's and came home across country which we managed easily as the Cathedral is a good land mark and we spotted it from the top of a hay stack. Short drill in afternoon.

Tuesday. Skirmishing etc. Outpost duty in the evening. I was on reconnoitering patrol and we had a nice stroll up and down between the various groups of sentries.

Wednesday. Shooting on a miniature range

folio 27 recto

[1914] at the Buffs Barracks. Did quite well and enjoyed the practice.

Thursday. Nov 18th. I put this day down as one of the hardest days in training. Only one other which I shall mention later approached it, for the amount of marching and fatigue that we went through.

At 9.15 we marched out with G. Company nearly 4 miles on the Dover road. We did some squad drill first and then made an attack. Advancing in open order over 2 miles of country and we made two long charges. Then we marched the 6 miles back getting home at 1 o'clock. We had to parade at 1.30 for Sandwich. It was snowing hard when we reached this quaint Cinque Fort and on leaving the station we passed all our boys including Ben and Bob, who were returning and they cheerfully reported the place to be a rotten hole. The march from the station to the

folio 28 recto

[1914] Sandwich Golf House was very long and tedious and after the mornings labours we were glad to get some tea which was waiting for us. We met all our good Sergeants again, Marshall, Annesley, Kavanagh etc., - a pleasant change after "plumber" Wilcox and we soon bedded down on the wood floor on our great coats. I was with the two Robbies (brothers) and we got along well together.

Friday Nov 20th. Bitterly cold day.

We had to run 50 yds. to a tap on the sand hills to wash ourselves and this was a brave effort attempted by some but left alone by the majority for the cold was intense. Breakfast, coldish bacon, and muggy tea or coffee (as the fancy prompted you to call it) à la Croydon – but what a different appetite I had now to what I had in the Railway days. A little musketry exercise with Sergt. Marshall who is,

folio 29 recto

[1914] and I hope I don't mention it too often in this diary, a fine chap.

We had a "tea" dinner and then set off for the ranges and had some practice with the rifle and after using a sporting gun I was surprised at the machine like accuracy of the Lee Enfield. We got dinner on our return from the range consisting of meat, potatoes, and carrots and stew. After this a number of us walked into Sandwich across the marshes and did some shopping and Billy Walton and I returned together and were lucky enough to keep to the path and find our way back in the dark.

Saturday Nov. 21st. Six mile route march in the morning. Sergt. Kavanagh, E Company, used to play for the Merton Hockey Club and that was how he remembered me. I also renewed my acquaintance with

folio 30 recto

[1914] Lewis Jones, of E Company, whom I knew when I was a youngster in St. Domingo Vale. In the afternoon we had a good game of Football.

Sunday 22nd. As there was too much wind we did no shooting but had a little skirmishing on the sandhills and in the afternoon and evening had a good walk and a rest.

Monday. More practice shooting, very cold at the Butts, I was a marker for some time and was nearly frozen. Did pretty well at firing and in the afternoon played football.

Tuesday. Fatigue work in the morning cleaning up Golf House. The weather was fine at the Butts in the afternoon and I got 3 Bulls and 2 inners at 300 yds. and 4 Bulls and an inner kneeling at same range. Went with Walton to town at night

folio 31 recto

1914] to a snug little tea room with a piano in it and we spent a pleasant evening after which I did a little shopping for the Sergeants and returned to the Golf House.

Wednesday. Got 3 Bulls and 2 inners at 500 yards.

Thursday. Firing for Standard Test. Met Lieut. Cohen (of Lewis's) in the Butts out of the 5th. He was killed in action when the 5th got to France. I got a 4 group i.e. 5 shots within a 4 inch ring at 100 range, 4 inners and a bull same range, 5 shots to be fired in 6 seconds. Total points for day 59 out of a possible 65.

Friday. Finished Standard Test with 3 Bulls and 2 inners at 500 yds. score a total for the test of 77 of 85.

Average of last batch of men 51. Then we

folio 32 recto

[1914] started firing the trained mans' test and I had the satisfaction of again getting a 4 group which counted the maximum score 25.

Saturday Nov. 29th. This is the day I referred to previously as a very trying and exhausting one. An alarm came and after packing up and cleaning the billet we set off to march to Canterbury, a distance of 15 miles. We got along fine and when we had done ten miles we stopped for lunch.

During this interval came the news that the alarm was off and we had to return. We were much disgusted for although we'd been having a pretty good time at Sandwich we were looking forward to seeing the boys again and getting back to our comfortable billets. To make matters worse the rain came down heavily and we

folio 33 recto

[1914] marched the return journey without a halt, and wet through to the skin. We were all worn out and I'm thankful to say I had a change of clothing with me. We re-commenced firing the next day, Sunday. Got 1 Bull, 3 inners, 3 magpies and - 1 outer at rapid firing at 500 yds. Was firing from a bad position but many had not come off so well as I did, still I was sorry I hadn't done better.

Monday. Couldn't get on the range as it was occupied by some other battalion, so went a short route march.

Tuesday. Finished firing. Here is a list of the 3 tests.

Practice Test.

100 yds. grouping. 3" group

200 yds. with rest. 3 B. 2. M.

200 yds. without. 4 B. 1. I.

300 yds. with. 3 N. 2. I.

300 yds. on knee. 4 .B. 1. 8.

300 yds. with rest. 3 B. 2. I.

folio 34 recto

[1914] Recruits Test. Trained Standard.

100 yds. 4" group 4 " group.

200 yds. 1 B. 4. I. 1,B, 2 I. 3 M, 2 O.

200 yds. 3 B. 2. I. 1 I, 3M. 1. O.

300 yds. Disappearing Target.

300 yds. 1 I, 4 M.

500 yds. 3 B. 2. I.

Sergeant Marshall told me one day coming from the range he would take me with him if ever he went out sniping. He did – but that's another and tragic incident which I will relate when I come to it. Those were happy days at Sandwich. The queer old fashioned town, the comfortable little cafe, narrow winding streets, the marches to and from the ranges along that straight coast road when we all sang the songs we knew, & the genuine good fellowship of the boys many of whom have now fallen, will live for ever in my memory. We had some good football there, and one or two good matches with other companies, and old F Company did

folio 35 recto

[1914] well in these games.

Wednesday Dec 2nd. Entrained for Canterbury. By the way a rather funny incident happened last night, I was chosen for guard under "Punch" Wilson as senior man. I was to be on guard 9 – 11, 3 – 5. I didn't fancy the 3 – 5 business and as Punch was short of cash and I wasn't, I bet him a shilling he wouldn't do my guard and I lost. Being Corporal of Guard he wasn't supposed to do any guard but only to see that we did it.

Arrived at Seymour Place alright. Surprising Stan and Mrs. Colbran. Glad to be with all the fellows again. Ben looked well and much broader than when I had last seen him.

Thursday. Dec 3rd. Long route march and skirmishing near Whitstable. Left

folio 36 recto

[1914] Canterbury at 7.50 and didn't get back til 3 and had nothing to eat but I made up for it and so did Stan at 14, Seymour Place. Hurt my knee against bolt of my rifle when jumping over a broad stream so paraded sick next day and got put on light duty for a while, counting ammunition.

Dec 4. Paraded for pay and went into town after tea to do a bit of shopping after which Stan and I went to the pictures.

Saturday. Knee still stiff so stayed in all day and enjoyed a good rest. Was inoculated for the 2nd time in the afternoon. George Barnes came in at night and had a game of whist with Mr. Colbran, Stan and I. He's 21 tomorrow.

Sunday. Chest a bit stiff, but went a walk through the Hop fields with Stan. No morning parade to-day.

folio 37 recto

[1914] Monday. On account of very heavy rain were only out in afternoon for a couple of hours and lecture at night.

Tuesday. Dec 9th . Sham fight towards Whitstable, against the 7th. Liverpool. We won I'm told but F Company saw little of it as we were in reserve. Bought a revolver and cartridges in afternoon and had a good sing song at night in our little Y.M.

Thursday. Chartham route march. Wet through.

Friday. Dec 12th. On Electric Guard with Stan 4 others and Corporal Yates who is a very good sort. Paraded at 2.50 and marched off to the power station and were soon well fixed up in a comfortable guard room, where we quickly had some boiling water and a good tea. Stan and I were on guard together and we had the following hours, 9 – 11 and 1.30 – 4 a.m. and can safely say they were the most pleasant and quickest guards I have ever done. It was a

folio 38 recto

[1914] nice night and when on guard one could go in to the boiler room and have a chat with the fireman and a warm at the boiler fires. Taking all into consideration, we spent a most enjoyable night and got back to Seymour Place with a good appetite for breakfast at 8 a.m.

Sat Dec. 12th. No morning parade after the guard of the previous night. In the afternoon we all paraded and marched to a field at the top of Hollow Lane for football. I got on one of the sides. Lieut. Tyson was on our forward line and though we got beaten 8 -2 it was a good game. We played with the ball sent from Harford Street. Went to the pictures at night.

Sunday. Wesleyan Church, parade in the rain. Stayed in rest of day.

Monday 14th. 2 mile run in the morning.

folio 39 recto

[1914] 12 mile route march and bayonet drill in afternoon.

Tuesday Dec 15th. Same as yesterday, but lecture in afternoon. Heard final results of shooting. My scores were:-

Instruction Test. 102 out of 120.

Recruits Standard. 77 out of 85.

Trained Mans'. 61 out of 87.

Wednesday. Another midnight alarm, but nothing came of it. Attacked towards Dove in the morning. Kit inspection after. Stayed in with Stan, as usual.

Thurs. The Scarborough Bombardment by the Germans was the evident cause of the alarm. More manoeuvres. Played piano for sing song at Y.M. at night.

Fri Dec 18th. Route march Chartham and back via Harbledown. I will remember this march. The country was very well varied and rugged and although it was winter one could see what a picturesque place it was.

folio 40 recto

[1914] Sat. Railway Crossing, Guard, Billy Robinson and I were together and had a nice night. The guard room was a plate-layers hut and we were very snug. We had to guard the Railway arches and the line above. Our duties were 2-4, 8-10, 2-4, 8-10 (Sunday) I slipped home to tea as I went on a message for Sergt. Johnson to the town. The whole affair was quite a picnic. There were 8 guards at Canterbury which our Battalion dropped in for once every ten days. Quarter Guard, Skating Rink (Army Food), G.P.O. Electricity Works, Railway Crossing, and Selern Tunnel. Of these I only had Electricity and Railway Crossing.

Transport and Quarter were the worst so I was lucky. Finished Guard at 11 a.m. Sunday morning and were very glad to have a good meal which was

folio 41 recto

[1914] waiting for us. After which I had a sleep followed by a bath at an hotel in St. Margaret's St.

Monday Dec. 21st. Inspected by Sir Ian Hamilton, General of the Central Forces. It was bitterly cold waiting for him to come along and two of our fellows fainted with the long stand at attention. Little Company Drill in the afternoon and in the evening went with Stan to Ben and Bob's billet and spent an enjoyable time with them till the evening roll call.

Tuesday. Football match in the afternoon, F Company v H. I wasn't picked for our Company's team as of course we had some good men. Good game after being down 2-0 we got three and they equalised close on time.

Wednesday. Out with Battalion in

folio 42 recto

[1914] morning finding our way home in the fog. Our Brass Band came down and it is very good and together with the Bugle Band when we are marching it is splendid. Went to a Brigade Concert. It was a splendid show. Several artists came down from London.

Thursday. Route March through Upstreet about twelve miles each way. Went to pictures with young Arthur Colbran and bought some tobacco for Mr. and a little hand bag for Mrs. Colbran. Town very busy for it was X'mas Eve.

December 25th. Friday. Christmas Day.

Received many presents from home and friends. No parades. Football in morning, grand game. Got one or two goals and as the selection committee were present I was glad. Went to Ben's place at night.

Boxing Day. Many of the officers and

folio 43 recto

[1914] men looked seedy after yesterday's "enjoyment". Did some skirmishing in hail and sleet. No parade in the afternoon. Spent it on a wild goose chase or rather a wild pheasants chase at Canterbury West Station where it was alleged a pair of the latter birds had been seen with my address on. But nothing came of it. However, the afternoon wasn't wasted for the folks at home hearing of the above sent a pair along and they were much appreciated at Seymour Place. Stayed at home in the evening as usual.

Sunday. Wesleyan Church. Bath in afternoon at the Fleur-de-Lys Hotel with Stan and stayed in at night.

Monday. Route March in morning. Played for company v H. Lost 3-0. Great game in the mud. They adapted themselves better to the conditions than we did I

folio 44 recto

[1914] played inside right with Robbie as centre forward. Got complimented on my play by several, so was very satisfied but wish we'd have won, for we were thus knocked out of the competition and we had an excellent side.

Tuesday. On armourers fatigue which was lucky, for not only was the work interesting but as we were having our rifles changed to the new style I was in a position to obtain a jolly good one with a handsome stock whereas many were old style with new barrels. This rifle was the one I kept all the time afterwards refusing to change it for the short rifles when I had the chance. It was a bonny rifle and Stan was envious for he had got a rotten one and he and very "rifle proud" and always kept his article in splendid order.

Wed. Skirmishing in morning. Football afterwards. Played for 1st versus 2nd. We won 3-1 Only a scrappy game. Scored one.

folio 45 recto

[1914] Thurs. Dec.31st. Company Dinner at Fountains Hotel. Good concert. A good deal of drinking. All the officers, were well away, Westby, Tyson, Dobell and about 50% of the men. There was a very good pianist, and some good singing Lieut.Dobell's attempt at "Youre my Baby"" and "Gunboat Hughes" "Wedding Glide" were songs to be remembered.

Jan 1st. Route March and skirmishing. Pay in afternoon. Stayed in at night.

Sat. Jan 2nd. 12 mile route march. Company drill in the afternoon. In the morning we had marched some 6 miles out and returned, each company coming a different way and led by Sergt. Marshall we came back at a good speed and without a halt and because we got back so early we had an afternoon parade and other companies who had taken their time had

folio 46 recto

[1915] none. So we were very tired and disgusted by the time we had finished drill at Hollow Lane fields.

Sunday. Wesleyan Church in the evening with Robbie, Ben, Bob and Stan.

Monday Jan 4th. Digging trenches at Street End near Bridge. Weather nice and bright but trenches hard to dig on account of the nature of the ground for hereabouts there was a good deal of flint. No parade after.

Tues. Company marched to Street End and found our way through the woods home. Played E Company. Great game. Lost 6-4 Our team, goal Bob Litchfield, Pumock, and Crebin, Wilson, Hull, Lister, (Left) Thorburn, Rigby, Robbie, Self and Trufear.

Thursday Jan 7th. Foot inspection in morning and Route march round Chartham in the afternoon. Stan on Transport Guard.

folio 47 recto

[1915] I took his supper up. Its an awful hole. Only a thin pathway between a perfect quagmire to the hut were the guard rest.

Friday. Jany 8th. Finishing trenches. Night manoeuvres – a farce.

Saturday. Orderley cyclist. 7 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. Had a good many messages to take. Glad I got this job instead of Transport Guard.

Monday. More trench digging went out at 7.45 a.m. and didn't get back to dinner till 3.45. No further parade, but went to the pictures with Stan, Ben and Bob.

Tuesday. Route march through Bridge, Street End and Chartham, 15 miles. Lovely day. Football in afternoon lost 4-2. Good game.

Wednesday. Jany 13th. My 24th Birthday.

Received many presents from home. Big sham fight we did nothing but hang about. Ben

folio 48 recto

[1915] and Bob in at night.

Thursday. Marched through Blean, Harbledown and on to the Whitstable Road. Band was with us as usual and sounded very well.

In the afternoon we drew mufflers and singlets from the Q.M.Stores.

Was trying to get leave home about this time but it was no good.

Jan 14th. 210 men came from Blackpool to join the first Battalion and 29 came to F. Company.

Friday. Another Harbledown, Blean and Chartham 15 mile march. It exhausted several of the Blackpool men and we didn't think much of them at all.

Sat. Battalion drill by Adjutant. Same old stuff under a different title.

"Glorified" Squad drill. It looked fine to see 1200 fellows carrying out the

folio 49 recto

[1915] various formations.

Football in afternoon. Booked baths at Fleur-de-Lys for to-morrow.

Sunday. Paraded sick and had foot rubbed. It had been aching under the instep during the last week. Wesleyan Church in the evening after our baths.

Monday. Drill morning and afternoon.

Tuesday. Manoeuvres near Mackington.

We in reserve had nothing to do. Did not get back until 3.45 Pictures with Ben, Bob, and Stan.

Wednesday. At the trenches near Street End again. We had an easy time. Heard that the 5th were going to France in a fortnight.

Jan 21. Field Day. Nothing to do for F. Company.

Friday. Snow. Had some good snowballs fights especially near the Y.M.C.A.

folio 50 recto

[1915] Route march round Chartham, the country looked lovely. Football in the afternoon and played whist with the old folks at night.

Sunday. Wesleyan Morning and Evening with Stan, Ben, Bon, Robbie and Harper.

Monday. We held the trenches at Street End against the rest of the battalion. Our section and another had to hold a small wood on the left of the position and as we got into it we found a party of men fixing up a machine gun. We captured it and took it to the trench. The whole affair was a farce, they would all have been wiped out easily.

Tuesday Jan 26th.

The Sittingbourne Incident.

In the afternoon orders came from the orderley room that 18 men were required with full kit on there immediately. I

folio 51 recto

[1915] was amongst the chosen who were picked on their Shooting records and after a breathless 5 minutes rush down at the orderley room, 18 men, 1 corporal, 1 sergeant, and 1 officer from each company and soon the 8 companies were down at Canterbury West Station. We had no idea where we were going but got into the train and started. This is a rough sketch of the journey."

folio 52 recto

[1915] Through Sandwich, Deal and Dover and back through Canterbury East Station through to Sittingbourne which is not far from Chatham Dock Yds. Here we split up into single companies and marched out of the town. When we got into the country Lieut. Tyson told us our duties. We had to guard the roads against Motor Cars with big head lights as it was Kaiser's birthday shortly and Zeppelins were expected. The first night we slept in a huge barn. The names of the party were as follows:- Lieut. Tyson, Sergt. Lee, Cpl. Donan, Rigby, Topping, (Officers Servant) Punch and Sid, Wilson, Frank and Billy Williams, Troughear, Marland, Charlie Morton, Jump, Alec, Salmon, Harry Fox, Tom Phillips, Jack Pointer, Billy Thomas, Stirk, Jack Crebbin and Jimmy Wynn. We were a very happy party. I had a couple of cold guards in the night. No guard during the day and Billy Williams and I spent it in Sittingbourne."

folio 53 recto

[1915] Tyson got us fixed up in a fine empty house with a fire and gas cooker and everything. We had the best of food and enjoyed this pleasant change from the Canterbury routine immensely.

Wed. Jan 27th. Quiet day rested most of the time. Nice night only a bit cold. Did two guards 9-11, 3-5.

Thurs. Saw some Belgian Wounded Soldiers and had a chat in bad French to one of them, who had been wounded in the siege at Antwerp. Lovely night duties 2 on and 6 off owing to new arrangement. Roads very quiet, only saw one car while we were here.

Fri. Left for Canterbury at 8.40 in time to see the Boys start for Sandwich and we are to go tomorrow.

Sat. Left for Sandwich with the Sittingbourne party and a few others. Got medically examined again here and then proceeded to our billets

folio 54 recto

[1915] up in Shamrock Terrace at the house of a certain Mrs. Browne. Had three good billet chums, Billy Williams, Billy Walton and Harry Malone. I slept with Billy Williams between Army blankets. They provided beds but no clothes.

Went to local picturedrome at night.

Sun. Finding billet comfortable. Ben, Bob and Robbie are together in the old part of the town about a mile from us but quite near where the company forms up on parade.

Shooting to-day. Got a 4" group. Home again at 5.30.

Monday. The ranges are 3 miles away from the town across the marshy golf links. Went in after noon, did fairly well totalling with yesterday's score 67 out of 77 possible.

Tuesday. No firing to-day, gale too strong. Every day two of we four had to be up early and across the town for rations before 7

folio 55 recto

[1915] o'clock and Billy Williams and I went together. Billy is married and is a very nice chap indeed. We used to go to a little cafe near the town hall and have some tea and as they had a piano there we used to have plenty of music and singing.

Wed. Finished Trained mans' test. Got 2 Bulls and 3 inners at 500 and finished with the best score in F. 84 out of 97. Then we started the Marksmans test and I made a bad mistake in grouping putting my last shot on another mans target through being in too much of a hurry after a cartridge had jammed and lost the whole 25 points. A very bad start indeed.

Friday. More shooting. Did pretty well but can never make up yesterday's mistake.

Lovely day at the ranges.

Saturday. Finished firing with a total of 80 out of 130 and left for Canterbury at 4.45

folio 56 recto

[1915] Sunday. Glad to be back at Seymour Place again.

Monday. Home on leave to-morrow, wired to tell them. Get new clothes in afternoon and went with Billy Williams, Stan and Cpl. Yates to pictures after.

Tuesday. Was astonished to meet Garnie in Wincheap. He had come down from Blackpool to take over with the others our old Transport for the 2nd Battalion as they were coming to take our place when we went.

Left for home at 12.30 and arrived home at 9.p.m.

Final Leave Home and After.

I had a thoroughly enjoyable time and saw most of my friends in Wallasey and Liverpool.

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were spent in this way and on Saturday after

folio 57 recto

[1915] watching Liverpool v Chelsea we had a family gathering at home.

Sunday. Said Good-bye to all the Church folks in the morning and all our own folks at 4 o'clock and went with Harold and Mr. Hill via Seacombe to Lime Street where there was a huge crowd to see the 6th off.

Ben, Stan and Cpl. Beeston were in carriage and the journey to Canterbury seemed short. Mr. [and] Mrs. Colbran were waiting for us with a good supper all ready.

Monday. New equipment issued. Splendid stuff. Inspected in afternoon. Pictures with Garnie, Stan, Ben and Robbie at night.

Tuesday. Our eyes are set on France. We expect orders any day. All our kit has been carefully examined and we are having an easy time, and few route marches. Garnie is billeted up Wincheap, not very far away. On ration party to-day and went to town with Garnie at night.

folio 58 recto

[1915]

Wed. Feb. 17th. Had photos taken with Garnie in the evening. No parades.

Thurs. Inspected by Adjutant and C.O. and a short route march in our new boots. Another equipment inspection. I've given all my extra kit to Garnie.

Friday 19th. Expected to move to-day, but didn't. We were paid up to date and received my pay book.

Sat. Feb 20th. Inspected by the Brigadier at the Buffs Drill Hall. Went with Stan through the Old Westgate Towers which are very interesting, and ancient.

Sunday. Church parade, and Ammunition Fatigue, getting new stuff for our new equipment.

Monday Feb 22nd. Another inspection and short route march.

Wednesday Feb 24th. Up at 4 a.m. Good breakfast and paraded at 5. Snowing

folio 59 recto

[1915] hard and we had to stand in it for 3½ hours at Canterbury West Station. Entrained for Southampton at 2 p.m. Sailed about six. Transport very crowded. Not a soul saw us off, not a wave of a handkerchief “not nothing” as un-romantic a way of setting out to fight for one’s Country and the right etc. etc., as one would wi[s]h for.

We embarked from huge sheds and the public were totally excluded from the neighbourhood. We were guarded by four destroyers and had an uneventful passage and arrived at Harve on a beautiful February morning.

folio 60 recto

[1915] ON ACTIVE SERVICE. After some delay in disembarking we formed up and marched through the streets of the “Liverpool of France” and found all very strange to our English eyes. Children followed us begging for “bisquies” and “sovenires” and people stared down at us from high windows. The good people of Harve had by this time got used to our men passing through, so our advent caused little stir.

After a brief halt in the town we had a very stiff zigzag climb to the British Encampment on the hill behind. Here we got assigned to tents, about 12 men for each and in the afternoon sheepskin coats were issued to us. In the evening we went to a Y.M.C.A. place and I played the piano, and we had an impromptu concert.

folio 61 recto

[1915] Next day we moved off leaving about 100 men at the base including Lieut. Dobell, Stan Rowland, Harry Malone and a few others. We marched down to the station and after much delay entrained in cattle trucks for an unknown destination. There were 37 of us in our truck, and there wasn’t much room to stir. The journey up to Flanders was not a comfortable one and it lasted for a day and a night. The country was pretty and here and there in the small villages and railway crossings people ran up and cheered the train and we would [?see] some some of our cavalry, evidently in reserve, a very long way off down the line. At last on the 27th Feby. we arrived at the town of Baillieut and were billeted in a huge empty convent school and soon Ben and I went to have a look round the town.

We met Harold Egan outside and we went and

folio 62 recto

[1915] had a cup of coffee together at one of the Estaminets. In the evening Ben and I went to a concert given by the Artist Rifles and found the talent excellent and enjoyed the whole show immensely.

Next day Sunday a lot of Liverpool Scottish came down to see their friends in the 6th. and I met many I knew. We were inspected by some "big gun" in the afternoon.

Monday. Inspected again.

Ben and I found a good little place to get meals and with the aid of my bad French we got along famously.

Mar. 2nd. Tuesday. Marched up to Barns near Vlamertinge where we were billeted. Ben and I with Sergt Marshall and our platoon were fixed up in a comfortable loft, but as the surroundings were very muddy, our bedroom was soon in a filthy state. So next day we moved about a mile away

folio 63 recto

[1915] to a better and bigger barn where we were very cosy and where we could procure coffee and eggs and bread and butter at the Farm House.

March 4th. At 4 p.m. after a quiet day we moved off towards Ypres and though the distance was only 6 miles or so, the march occupied a long time, and we were very tired. We waited about near Vlamertinge till dark and at 6 o'clock we moved off through this little town, the streets were lined with French, Belgian and English soldiers whose "Good luck boys" and "Bon Soirs" were very pleasing to our ears. We were out for business at last. On through the darkness. A battalion from the trenches passed us some of them said "Hello boys who are you", "Liverpools." They were Londoners. "How's the South Coast Railway", they wanted to know, and some added that if we were good as the

folio 64 recto

[1915] Liverpool Scottish we'd do. On we went the Star Lights of the trenches like Roman Candles now plainly visible. Motor Ambulances with their burdens passed us, splashing us with mud. Then we could hear the sharp crack of rifles and an occasionally boom of heavy guns and soon we reached Ypres.

Here we saw in the darkness houses and churches smashed in with heavy gun fire and at 10 o'clock after much meandering about we were safely housed in the Cavalry Barracks, and were soon fast asleep in spite of the strangeness of our surroundings, and the occasional whiz of a big shell over head, and the resultant roar when it hit its objectives.

March 5th. (From letter) Good breakfast at a little house in a tumbledown street close by. Just outside the barracks where

folio 65 recto

[1915] a shell has hit the road is a stream (where we wash) which previously ran under the road. We don't know where it comes from or how many dead bodies it flows over, but the water is good enough for washing purposes and drinking (after it has been well boiled)

Ben and Bob and I went and had a look round the town, but as we only had been allowed 1 hour, and we had had a meal in that time we couldn't see much of the place, but there were very few

houses which had not been struck by shells. At dusk A Company left for the trenches for the 1st time, and we watched them march out of the courtyard with mingled feelings, pleasure at being in the thick of it and apprehension of what the future held in store.

Sat Mar 6th. No 7 Platoon had a very nice room for sleeping in and if the

folio 66 recto

[1915] floor was concrete and not soft we had a fair supply of straw for the first few days, at any rate we kicked it out after because it got too messy with trench mud. Heavy

shell fire from our guns near by. Had a walk into town and bought a few extras for our tea. We found that our billet, the Cavalry Barracks had been the scene of many hand to hand conflicts with the Germans and the walls, stair cases and iron work were perforated and smashed with bullet holes. C and D Company were still in Barns and had not landed up here yet.

The rations we were getting were good especially the “macconicies” which are tinned meat and vegetables of a very good quality, and we could always slip out of the barracks and get rolls, coffee and eggs from the little shops

folio 67 recto

[1915] who were doing a good business if a somewhat perilous one; for shells came over frequently and aeroplanes dropped souvenirs near by occasionally. A Company returned alright. They only had three slightly wounded. Bob's platoon were out on fatigue work and although they had a nasty night none were hit. Lucky 7 Platoon slept the sleep of the just.

Sunday Mar. 7th. Our 1st. time in the trenches. We left at 6.30, close on dusk the time when the people at home were going into Church, but it was the queerest Sunday night I had ever spent.

We marched out towards the centre of the horse-shoe shape of trenches round Ypres now plainly showed by the white star lights for ever going up between the trenches. Turning to the left of the Rue de Lille Road, sharply through the

folio 68 recto

[1915] gates and up the drive of what was once a splendid chateau. We presently found ourselves marching through a sea of thin mud, knee deep. Mud in excelsis with a few deep Jack Johnson holes here and there into which some few unfortunates fell.

Then came a pleasant reminder that there was a war on, in the shape of flying bullets – the plonk and hiss of one striking the mud at your side and the sharp crack of one going overhead and smashing through tree trunks. As we approached nearer, nobody hit as yet, we could hear the crack of rifles and in the close presence of the star lights we felt we were discovered and waited, with, I dare say shaking knees, for the arrival of bits of lead. But our fears were groundless for the Allemands were on the other

folio 69 recto

[1915] side of the hill.

At last we got to a wood and after wandering about aimlessly we eventually found ourselves in a dry ditch full of mud-stained but cheerful men.

They were the 1st. Bedford Regt. and very decent they were to us. This was a surprise trench, in the first line but concealed in the wood, and we had orders not to fire at all, but just keep a good look out. We were mixed up with the Bedfords who were to show us our various duties. Most of the night was spent on guard but I got a little sleep in the early morning. Next day very early some of our boys were sent to the wood behind into dug outs and I went with them. Ben did not come just at this time, as he was not there. We soon had a big fire going and were warming and drying ourselves at it. Then we got some breakfast going.

folio 70 recto

[1915] There were about 12 Bedfords and 8 Liverpools in this dug out and we had a very nice day, sitting round the fire hearing all the stories of those who had been out at the beginning. We were able to procure some potatoes from a neighbouring ruined farm for dinner and as I had plenty of Oxo cubes and Bully Beef I did well with regard to food. We had a few scares during the day, when there was a lot of rapid firing going on and we had to be ready to run to the trench if an attack started but nothing of the sort happened. In the evening a Sergt Major and Captain's Orderley of the Norfolks came in to our dug out, both had been wounded by the same bullet which passed through the knee of the Sergt. Major and through "

folio 71 recto

[1915] the foot of the Orderley. It was strange for they had been companions and had been out from the first. We were relieved by C. Company. So we 15 from the dug outs went down the line with the Bedfords who were billeted at the Chateau. Here we met our Major Wainwright by himself, he had got separated from the rest of his party and was glad to find us. We tramped home to the Cavalry Barracks, very tired but happy and satisfied to possess complete skin covering.

Bob had a bit of luck, a bullet struck him but st[r]uck sideways against his skin, having been turned by his cartridge pouches inflicting just a slight scratch. B Company's casualties were 2 killed and 3 wounded, 1 of the latter, Pinches, one of the Blackpool recruits, afterwards died of wounds in the hospital where I landed at

folio 72 recto

[1915] Rouen No. 8. Stationary. We were unlucky to have these casualties for A Company had just been through the same as we, and only had three slightly injured. Spent most of next day scraping the mud off ourselves and resting up. We bedded down quickly for we knew we had to be up early next day. The trench we were at the day before was in the woods near what was called Murder Hill.

Rough Sketch.

folio 73 recto

[1915] Wed. Mar 10th. Up at 3 a.m. Paraded at 4 in the dark and received picks and shovels. We marched off past the chateau and started work clearing away the deep slime for the Royal Engineers to make a decent road to the Cheshire Dug outs and trenches. It was very tedious and unpleasant job and some of us came upon some grim relics of previous fighting. We were sheltered from rifle fire, only one man was hit all day, and he was in the Engineers. We were unable to light fires, however, so had to live on water, bully beef and biscuits. Ben and I got tired of slime shifting, and taking our opportunity joined a party carrying down young fir trunks from the woods to line the pathway.

We met a good many Cheshires near their dug outs, and one from our village Fred Howard, and we had a chat with him. Occasionally when a Taube came over and the

folio 74 recto

[1915] whistle was blown three times we had to bolt to the dug out like rabbits to their holes lest we should be seen.

They were shelling a farmhouse near by and we saw shrapnel bursting near a party of our men (not the 6th) and could see them all fleeing for shelter.

Well the day came to end at last and we got back to barracks, thoroughly tired out.

Thurs Mar 11th. Cleaned and rested up and had a feed in town. Trenches last night. In the firing line this time. No 31b trench amongst our good friends the Bedfords again. It was quite near the trench we'd been in before but this was a splendid trench. A huge thick sandbag barrier with firing loopholes in. The enemy were about 80 yds away, through a thin wood. I started putting bullets over their way firing at

folio 75 recto

[1915] flashes mostly and never firing twice from the same place. The night passed away very quickly

Friday 12th. This was the hottest day. I mean the most exciting and dangerous I ever had in France. At 6 a.m. I was sent with Kewish and two Bedfords to an advanced trench on our left to fill sand bags to make up a breach caused by a trench mortar the day before. We started filling them and the young Bedford Officer (who was killed later in the day) slung them into the breach, refusing to let anyone else do it. It was a dangerous job. The Germans were 30 yds. away and were pouring lead through this gap and every bag he put in was ripped with bullets but he kept behind cover the best he could. Finding bullets couldn't stop him they started plugging trench mortars at us and some of them burst perilously near. They are awful

folio 76 recto

[1915] shells. You can hear them being fired and you can hear the Zonk Zonk of the shell coming your way. You can see them coming down and with a mighty rush of air they are on top of you and as they burst 10 or 15 yds away they hurl showers of stones and earth all over you.

A dozen must have dropped quite close by us that morning.

It was a hot corner. We had the breach made up to a height of one yard and could crawl in safely past it and had nearly finished our supply of bags when a Corporal of the Bedfords and 6 men came along with about 2,000 more bags. (I met that same Corporal in James St. Hospital, Birkenhead later, Corporal Fish).

We were, however, promised a relief and during a brief rest in the operations we reported to Lieutenant of A Company

folio 77 recto

[1915] Lieut. Trench who told us to light a fire near his dug out for some meal to be made. I made a start but a trench mortar made an end of my first attempt, and as I started again I heard another coming down. I felt this was coming right on us so I made a dive head first into a dug out near by and with a terrific explosion it burst about 5 yds away and the dug out fell in on top of me.

Kewish who was unhurt pulled me out by the legs and after I had sorted myself out we noticed Billie Robinson and another had come up to relieve us so we lost no time bolting back to Ben and the others in 31b where we felt tolerably safe. It was a terrible morning and I felt we would never come out of that place alive. I shall never forget it. Kewish stuck it well

folio 78 recto

[1915] contrary to my expectations, for he is a nervous sort of chap. We had a quiet afternoon and got back to Barracks early at about 8.30 I think.

Saturday, March 13th. Cleaning up and resting all day. Carrying up ammunition at night – a hard job but all the boys got back safely. I saw Ralph Dodd at the Infantry Barracks and had a good chat with him, also Dave Robertson who had had a slight wound in the neck but has recovered alright.

Sunday 14th. Captain Montgomery of D Company was killed yesterday and he was buried near the Chateau to-day and many of our men who knew him well went up to pay their last respects to one of the best officers in the Regiment.

Monday. 15th. We had an alarm, in the night and turned out and marched along the Rue

folio 79 recto

[1915] de Lille Road at 4.30, but it did not lead to anything. The Germans had been making a night attack, but I expect we had driven them back easily, and so the Liverpools weren't needed. We spent all day in Barracks except for an hour or two in the middle of the day when Ben, Bob and I had a walk round the town and inspected the ruins.

Tuesday 16th March. At 8.40 a.m. we left Ypres and marched away to Vlamertinge, I fell into a ditch on the way and got wet and laughed at. We soon found a suitable barn and after warming up some Oxo with one of my handy little spiritene fires Ben and I were soon asleep. Early next morning we were roused by some Belgian children with "Bruid" (bread) "Aag" (eggs) and "Chocolate Fritz" (Fry's Chocolate) "Oraangees" and other oddments. They

folio 80 recto

[1915] had heard of our arrival and were coming to make hay before the sun shone.

March 17th. Played football for 7 and 8 platoon v 5 and 6. Good game drew 4-4

Received our first pay in France, 15 francs. Ben and I on guard during night. Nothing much doing. At the farm house there was an old Flemish woman who amused us all for she talked a good deal and it sounded gibberish. Her mild husband, however, could understand enough French to get along and Rawlings and I were unofficial interpreters for the platoon.

We had an impromptu concert in the evening, and a happy family we were in that barn. The Sergeants' Marshall, Annesley and Donnan slept between the two doors and the straw was fixed in the barn in three tiers rising from the cement floor near the doorways. Ben and I were on the

folio 81 recto

[1915] second one and we had candles stuck round the walls. Corporal Phil Shaw obliged with several songs and so did Sergt. Annesley including "Somewhere a voice is calling" "My old Chako" "Because" etc.,

March 19th. Spent the day playing football and drinking coffee and writing letters at the Estaminet near by. We saw a small party of Belgian Cavalry and they did not look up to much. There was some snow in the night, but not much. In the afternoon Ben and I walked to a little village and enjoyed a feed of Chips, Eggs and coffee (5d) – a peculiar little place to English eyes – a weird church – weird grave stones with lots of wooden crosses marking French soldiers graves. The boys who had stayed behind at Havre on Base duty, including Stan Rowland and Lieut. Dobell, joined us to-day.

folio 82 recto

[1915] Rough Sketch of Ypres District. showing our trenches and the different routes marked in red taken by your men to enter them from their billets in the town."

folio 83 recto

[1915] March 20th. We had a little drill to-day in the field adjoining the barn. We went up to the orderly room in a village two miles away to change my bayonet scabbard in the afternoon and later went to Elveradinge with Ben for a feed at night.

Sunday March 31st. Beautiful hot day – too hot we found at 4.15 when we marched into Ypres. We halted in the town rather fagged out with our heavy packs and had a “dixie” of tea between each platoon served out in the street.

We did not reach the trenches until about 1.30 a.m. relieving the Scottish in 38, 39, 40, and 41 trenches. I met George Coates here and had a chat with him little thinking I would never see him again. For he was killed in the Hooze charge in June. We were in 39 trench and Ben and I got a most comfortable spot.

Rough sketch.

folio 84 recto

[1915] Our position in Front of Hill 60

Quite a little nook which we made very cosy. It was a grand trench very dry and very safe. Hill 60 was facing us only a hundred yards away. We had good rations and we cooked all we wanted in a little brazier. I must say neither Ben nor I would have won prizes at fire lighting and we often had to trespass other fellows fires for our meals. We obtained water when our bottles were empty, at the sap-head where the mine commenced, which was intended to blow up the hill, and we used to take a stone rum bottle holding about a gallon and get it filled by the engineers there. it was very

folio 85 recto

[1915] black and muddy stuff but didn't taste so bad when boiled and tea put in.

We didn't get any sleep hardly at night as we were obliged to keep awake. The men were numbered 1,2, 1,2, 1,2, and so on and when we relieved the Scottish we all “stood to”, at the parapet. Then the order would come along “No 1's up[”] and No. 1 would be standing up taking occasional glances over the parapet and shooting and No. 2 could sit down and smoke but not sleep. The nights were frosty and our puttees already wet with our journey up froze to our legs. When I was “up” I used to fire a good deal to keep my rifle hot so that I could warm my hands on it and would generally get through 100 rounds in the night and 80 or so in the day. I fired fairly high often over the hill in the hope of a stray bullet finding a suitable billet, as many

folio 86 recto

[1915] of their “strays” brought down some of our men. Ben and I found that by tying sandbags with straw in round our legs we kept our feet fairly warm and when we were not “up” we would stand by a red coke fire in the next traverse and get warm. In the day time we were numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, So if I were number 1 I would have 5 hours off before I was on duty again. But in these 5 hours we were working in the trench filling sand bags or making butresses with them, so there was practically no chance of sleep. This then, was our manner of life on March 22 and 23. On this latter day we were relieved by A Company. Our casualties were, 2 killed and 3 wounded. Among the killed was Mountford one of the Blackpool Boys in 8 Platoon who was standing near Bob when”

folio 87 recto

[1915] he was hit. None in 7 platoon were touched and this was the last time up to the trenches that we all returned untouched. We got back to the Infantry Barracks at Ypres very tired. We found a good delivery of letters for us and I had a nice parcel from home with many good things in it.

Wednesday. March 24th. Very comfy in the Infantry Barracks and we were allowed more freedom to walk about the town so Ben and I had several good meals at the various cafès. We met a lot of the Liverpool Scottish who were now in the town. The Cheshires were in the same barracks and so were the Norfolks for it was a very big place.

25th Thursday. Spent similarly to yesterday and we laid in a stock of provisions for the trenches. Paraded at 6 p.m. Ben and I had a sandbag full of food and took turns carrying it as we found this a better idea than filling our valises, for during

folio 88 recto

[1915] the numerous halts on the way we could rest the bag on the ground.

We arrived at the trenches without loss and occupied the same places as before and Ben and I were very glad to be in our comfortable nook again and we rigged up a small shelter with the aid of our oilsheets and a rusty old rifle. Nothing of importance happened on Friday. I got through my usual number of rounds firing over their trenches as usual.

On Saturday March 27th, I had an exciting adventure which might have cost me my life and which did cost the life of a good officer and friend. It came about in this way. About 9.30 on this beautiful spring morning I saw Sergt. Marshall cleaning his rifle outside his dug out. I said "Hello Sergeant what are you doing" for usually Sergeants do not fire in the trenches

folio 89 recto

[1915] unless they care to. He said "I'm going down the communication trench to see if I can find the sniper who shot a hole through Jimmy Rundle's tunic" I said "Oh" and hesitated not liking to ask him to let me come with him but he said "Will you come" and I said "Yes" and took my rifle up and followed him. We found out the direction in which the shots from the rear had come and set off down the communication trench. We passed Lieut. Oliver and party of D Company in a support trench and reported where we were going. Leaving the communication trench lower down we searched the old trenches with bayonets fixed half expecting to come across the sniper, but as I said to the Sergeant it was much more likely that he would see us first and either shoot us or hide himself securely. However nothing happened and we rested a while watching the shells"

folio 90 recto

[1915] bursting in the blue sky over Ypres.

After being out well over an hour we started to return by a different way and one which would bring us nearer the sky line for we were below all this time and their bullets were travelling harmlessly overhead. At this time I was leading but Sergt Marshall said "Let me in front Raws" so I did and

presently he said "There's our fellows" and I saw we were close behind D Company in the support trench. He then said "We must just run across this open space (about 20 yds) come on" and he stepped out of the shallow little cut we were walking in and as he did so he fell back in my arms shot. He died immediately and I noticed his tunic torn on his left side. I turned my head sharply round thinking of the sniper and expecting a shot for myself every minute. I shouted to the boys near

folio 91 recto

[1915] by telling them Sergt. Marshall had been shot. I didn't know what to do exactly, whether I should stay by him or to leave him, but I decided, as I was exposed, after making sure he was really dead to run back the other way and not across the open. So I made good time along the low trenches stooping low and splashing through waterlogged trenches till finally dashing up the deep communication trench I came across our first Lieut. Dobell and Lieut. Oliver, near the place where the Sergt lay. I reported the whole affair to them and Sergeant Annesley much against Lieut. Dobell's wishes ran over to the spot to make sure his pal was dead and to get his papers. We decided to leave the body while night so I returned to Ben. Poor Sergeant Annesley now our platoon sergeant was much upset although he hid it well and started vigorously working on sandbag fatigue.

folio 92 recto

[1915] The boys were very cut up indeed for he was a fine fellow and a very good sport off parade and a smart officer on. I took some of my things off to dry and fortunately I had dry socks in my valise.

Only two hours after Sergt. Annesley sitting down next to us received a bullet in the back of his neck through the sandbags. We could feel it quite near his throat. It was a very close shave but he went down the trench whistling and saying he was off to Blighty. (That was the last I saw of him, but I might here add, he never got to Blighty (England) but recovered at Boulogne and returned to the line with the bullet still in his neck. Either from a wound in the knee or from some other cause he went down to the base again at a later date and recovering from this

folio 93 recto

[1915] asked the doctor to remove the bullet. I subsequently received several letters from him when I was in Dublin and he eventually took a commission). – About eleven o'clock on that eventful morning I received a message that I was wanted at Headquarters and, tidying up myself a bit, set off. Passing down 38 trench and the officers dug out, Major Wainwright stopped me, and telling me to sit down got me to relate the whole affair. This I did and then continued my way down to the railway cutting and along to the Head-quarters, dug out. In this enormous place, two large rooms dug out the side of the hill, and equipped with tables, chairs and lamps, I was ushered into the presence of the C.O. and Adjutant to whom I had never had the honour of speaking. They were very decent chaps and showed me maps of the trenches and I indicated the exact

folio 94 recto

[1915] spot where the affair happened and reporting the torn tunic we decided that it must have been a stray shot from the enemy's lines. After answering all their questions, and they did not treat the affair as a culpable one, or a mistake, but just as an unfortunate accident, I returned to the trench stopping again for a few minutes to chat to Major Wainwright. I don't think I was very upset but my main feeling was of sorrow that his life should have been thrown away on such a fruitless errand, and of thankfulness that I had escaped.

During the afternoon Sergt. Wilcox a most unpopular Sergt of 8 Platoon came along chipping at a wooden cross he was making for Marshall and said "We are going to fetch Jim's body in to-night will you come" and show us where he is". I said "Right" and when it was

folio 95 recto

[1915] dark he and George Gilmour and Eric Dodsworth and I went down to the place. When "brave" Sergeant Wilcox saw the place he said to me "oh-er you and Gilmour had better bring him in". So we both got out of the communication trench and crawled out, and with great difficulty dragged him along to the trench. I was fagged out with the job, as he was very heavy and the ground was rough. When we got him up to 39 trench on the stretcher, we discovered that the bullet had entered his heart, and gone out at his left side, so the theory of it being a shot from the front was a mistake.

He was shot by the sniper from behind the lines. This is my conviction and the reason I was not shot is probably because our men were near by and he (the sniper) would most likely be discovered. So he

folio 96 recto

[1915] picked the man with three stripes on his arm. Colour is lent to this argument by the fact that two days later a sniper was found near this part and killed by the Cheshires. Thank goodness this was the last of the two days in the trenches and in the evening we returned to the Infantry Barracks and I had to relate the incident to many of the "stay at homes", including Q.M.S. Williams and others who never went to the trenches.

Sunday 28th March. Rested up. Saw Dave Robertson and Ralph Dodd. Service in the Barracks at 4 p.m. Very touching one especially for those who had lost friends in the last few days.

Monday 29th. Ben and I had a fine and long to be remembered dinner at a cafe named the L'Epee Royale. There was a piano in the room and a Belgian Soldier

folio 97 recto

[1915] played on it first and then I did and he was very interested in Tipperary and others of the Marching Songs.

Left for the trenches at night. Joe Donnan was now our platoon Sergeant, he was a very good shot, but no good as an officer. Ben and I occupied our usual place in 39 trench. The first day in was marred by the tragic death of our new Platoon Sergeant, who was shot through the head whilst

firing over the parapet in the next traverse to where Ben and I were. We'd been talking to him only a minute before and we got quite a shock when he fell at our feet.

Nothing further happened during this spell in the trenches, the weather was fine and the nights frosty.

March 31st. Left the trenches at night and marched through Ypres. When we were through the town we met a Red Cross

folio 98 recto

[1915] field Kitchen and we all had a cup of Oxo, coffee or cocoa each of which was very acceptable and soon we were on the march again.

April 1st. 4 a.m. we arrived at the Huts the other side of Vlamertinge and we slept till 10.30. Cleaned up and rested all day.

April 2nd. Attended Good Friday Church Service in open air with Bedfords, Cheshires and Norfolks in the morning and went to see a picture show in a large barn in the evening. Very good pictures.

April 3rd. Heard Bishop of London preaching in open air. He's a fine fellow and all the chaps enjoyed the Service. In the afternoon we had a football match and I played for 7 Platoon v 5. Fine game, we won 3-2. Tyson I and Robbie scoring our goals. Concert at the Cinema Barn at night given by the Liverpool, very enjoyable.

folio 99 recto

[1915] April 4th. Watched the 6th playing the Dorsets, we lost 2-1. Good game. At night when all was quiet and we were sitting reading and writing in the Hut we were surprised to hear four whiz-bangs come over in quick succession dropping quite close to us. They gave us a start, and all lights were immediately extinguished. However, no more came over and we got to sleep in peace.

April 5th. Marched through Ypres in the rain at night and along the Rue de Lille road to the Chateau Rosenthal, which was only a mile from the trenches and was very much battered. It had been a splendid house. A very good piano was still left there, and on the Tuesday we had to stay in, we were playing on it all day. There was a Belgian Battery in the grounds which did a good deal of firing. In the evening

folio 100 recto

[1915] we were out on fatigue to the Cheshire trenches. Ben and I carried a large piece of woodwork for trench flooring up to the Cheshire dug outs.

Here we had to wait for a couple of hours in the rain and finally getting a box of ammunition between the two of us we pushed off with 30 others towards 27 trench. The approach was awful and Ben was not well to make matters worse. When we got near the trench we saw ahead of us the flashes of the German guns and knew we were on level country. So when the Star Lights went up we flung ourselves into the mud.

We had to enter the trench at the end of it – no communication trench of any kind. It was a filthy trench and few of the Cheshires were awake. All the officers and N.C.O's were asleep and it would have been an easy task for the Germans to have occupied the place.

folio 101 recto

[1915] After we had delivered the goods we set off out again and soon after getting through the wood which was full of Jack Johnson holes, dead men and horses, we found from our men in front that we had lost our guide. So Ben and I and two others found our way back to the trench and after a lot of trouble got another one, and we soon got back to the gully where the Cheshire dug-outs were, and eventually back to the Chateau soaking wet at 4 a.m. after being out 10 hours on a miserable two mile fatigue. Our two other fatigue parties had also got lost and this was one of the reasons why we disliked the Cheshires so, from our experience that night.

Wednesday April 7th. Spent the day getting our clothes dry in the basement of the Chateau and most of us were running about the place clad only in our sheepskin

folio 102 recto

[1915] coats and underpants and some of us looked queer sketches. In the evening we were relieved by the Manchesters and we marched off through Ypres and Vlamertinge to Ouderdoui to some huts in the woods there.

This march although only about 11 miles was a very fatiguing one, and many fellows had to drop out. However, Ben and I managed to stick it, but it was a good job it wasn't much further.

Thurs 8th. Finished drying our clothes and cleaning up and managed to get one or two good meals at the neighbouring farms.

Friday 9th. Ben and I and Smythe walked to Elveradinge where we used to go from the other huts and had another good meal.

Drill for an hour in the afternoon.

Sat. 10th. Paraded at 3.30 I discarded my sheepskin coat and threw it away. We marched

folio 103 recto

[1915] off towards Vlamertinge and found our Brigade drawn up along the road and we were divided up amongst the Bedfords and Norfolks. 7 Platoon found themselves among the latter and soon the whole brigade marched towards Ypres. It was a fine sight to see such a number on the march. Almost as far as the eye could see stretched out the thin Khaki line, four deep, tramping along under the hot sun. Near the town we divided up and No 7 Platoon with A Company of the Norfolks went into the town and billeted ourselves in an empty school. The Norfolks treated us splendidly and we got good rations and a good quantity of tea from them. Ben and I slept in an iron bedstead with a bit of straw on, and very cosy we were.

Sunday 11th. Walked about town and spent a quiet day. At night we marched up to the

folio 104 recto

[1915] dug outs behind the first line trenches and very soon got fixed and settled down for the night.

Monday 12th. Was very ill to-day and didn't do much work. The boys were sawing trees down and building new dug outs. In the evening we relieved another Company in the trenches. Trench 34 it was this time. A very nice trench but with rather a low parapet.

During the night Robinson who was next to me observed a small fire in the enemy's dug outs opposite and presently as it grew larger we could see figures trying to stamp it out and we passed the word down and opened fire on them, dropping some.

Immediately afterwards we got the word "rapid fire commence" and all the boys and the maxims were at it as hard as they could go and there were no figures near that bon-fire when we had done.

folio 105 recto

[1915] Tuesday 13th. My last day on active service.

About 2.30 in the afternoon I crept into a dug out near by the trench to try and get a little sleep and in this same place were two other of our fellows Cromer and Platt. I heard a number of shells bursting but thought they were ours. However, as I couldn't get to sleep owing to the noise I rejoined the boys in the trench and found Ben and Robbie and the others sitting tight against the wall of the trench. They told me the Germans were shelling us and Ben moved along a bit and I took his place. Immediately we heard another coming for us and we crowded, but as it exploded overhead I got a piece through my foot and I jumped up saying to Ben "I'm hit" and he started taking my puttee and boot off and two Norfolk stretcher bearers came and bound it up and Dave Wilson carried me on his back to a large

folio 106 recto

[1915] Dug out in the Norfolk Trench. When the shelling was over (and I only was hit; the two other men Cromer and Platt were buried in that same dug out where I had been, with almost the same shell but were all right when they were dug out). I was carried down the communication trench past D Company who were interested to see who was hit. I saw Jack and Dud and told them I was going to Blighty and soon I was at the Dressing Station. Here I was quickly attended to by the M.O. of the Norfolks. Fortunately some of our fellows were in the farm buildings near by, being on fatigue work and many came in to see me and Ernie Jones brought me a cup of tea, which was most acceptable, for loss of blood and the wound had made me terribly thirsty. Well I had quite a"

folio 107 recto

[1915] bit of pain the few hours following and Eric Dodsworth one of the four who brought me down stayed with me as long as he could. He was very touched on parting with me and he gave me a wrist strap purse which I'm sorry to say I subsequently lost. That was the last I ever saw of him for he was killed not many weeks after.

The ambulances arrived about 300 yds. away at 10 p.m. and after considerable delay I was put in one and endured a terrible two mile run on those wretched roads to Ypres Hospital. Here I was inoculated against lockjaw and spent the night sleeping fairly well on my stretcher. Next day we were put in the ambulances again and went on to Poperinghe, 6 miles away. My wound was

folio 108 recto

[1915] again dressed and we entrained at 2 p.m. for France. I was fixed up as comfortable as could be managed in a first class compartment with a Cameron Highlander as a companion and after 26 hours journey arrived at Rouen and after another 2 mile ambulance ride I arrived at Ward M.B. 1 Scottish Section No. 11 Stationary Hospital. It was a remarkable coincidence that I was lifted off my stretcher by an orderley named Dunlop son of Mrs. Dunlop whom I met on the ""Celtic"" when I was returning from America in 1911 and a friend of Mrs. Barnes. I was in this hospital 14 days. I got my England ticket in three days but no opportunity for sending me came for two weeks.

My foot was dressed with wet dressings and was not painful but I could not sleep well, partly because of the pain, and partly because of the noise the other

folio 109 recto

[1915] patients (many were badly wounded) and the night nurse made. My appetite was good and everything looked to be going well.

On April 27th. we left the Hospital for the station, the kindly young doctor fastening a pillow on to my foot to save it from being moved about (which pillow I now have) and this proved most beneficial. The train journey to Harve was most comfortable and I slept most of the 6 hours. We were rather disgusted to find that the ship was bound for Dublin but as we were glad to leave France we didn't mind too much.

The ship was the Oxfordshire and was very comfortable. I seemed to get worse on board and the Doctor performed a slight operation, which proved to be no good at all. We had a calm crossing and on April 30th. were safely anchored in Dublin

folio 110 recto

[1915] Bay. I was delighted when carried off the ship to see the English (or Irish I should say) faces of the crowd. There was a fleet of motor cars waiting, and I was placed in a comfortable Tradesman's vehicle along with a boy who was my very good friend afterwards Paddy Hutchinson of the Leinsters. I thought he was much worse than I for he was hit in three places but as things turned out he was not. The owner of the vehicle was with it and he sat by us instructing the driver to take a round about way to be on the best roads and to drive very slowly and soon we arrived at the Hospital in Mountjoy Square.

I was delighted to find myself in such a comfortable house and felt sad because my label had the word "Temporary" on, thinking I was only going to be there Temporarily. But it meant the Hospital was a Temporary one.

folio 111 recto

[1915] HOSPITAL LIFE IN DUBLIN.

I was very soon attended to and Doctor Crawford put me under gas and ether and put a tube through my ankle. I managed to get them to wire home to the people to tell them where I was.

May 1st. May Day. A very sad and much to be remembered day by me for on it I said Goodbye to my right foot. It was a tremendous surprise to me when at 6.30 p.m. Dr. Crawford said. "Look here Raws this foot will be no good to you and I'm afraid if we don't get it off your life will be in great danger."

Recovering from my surpr[ise] and shock at the news I told him I should like to have further advice which he immediately promised and at 8 p.m. Dr Purser and another Dr. came in and assured me that it must be amputated

folio 112 recto

[1915] so I told Dr. Crawford to go ahead. I was put to sleep in bed and woke up about 3 a.m. on Sunday morning.

Father and Mother arrived later in the day and they were glad to see me alive. I might as well draw a veil over the next 7 days. I understand I was very bad on the Monday and the succeeding days, so much so, that my life was despaired of. Gangrene poisoning of the worst kind had set in and was going strong.

On the following Saturday however, I had a good sleep and that seemed to improve matters for the Doctors' report next day to Father and Mother was very hopeful. Then I started to get well for I see on Wed May 12th by my diary 11 days after the operation, the Gramophone was playing in the ward and it was to the strains of "When Irish eyes are

folio 113 recto

[1915] smiling" and "Look out mother when the Band begins to Play" that I set about getting well.

The dressings were painful but on the whole all went well and kindly morphia in very small quantities gave me good sleep. Sisters Proctor and Wood were angels of goodness to me and Dr. Crawford was splendid. He would say "Well, I'll just give you a whiff of gas Raws for I want to do something this morning". I took gas fine and didn't have bad after effects like some boys had. Sister Stuart the commandant, and the other sisters and Doctors were very good to Father and Mother who came to see me every day, at any time they liked. Having seen me well on the road to recovery they left for home on Sat. May 15th.

Captain Mann came to see me on that day for

folio 114 recto

[1915] the first time and a very good friend he was to me in after days. The following week I had a bad time. The poison had got above the amputated part and above the knee got very bad and I had

three more operations when deep incisions were made in that part and draining tubes put through. I was fed at this time on Raw Beef Juice, Champagne Chicken Jelly and Chicken Broth and my appetite was good. I had plenty of pain with the tubes at dressing times but most of the days I was alright. The boys were very kind and solicitous about my welfare and Bissell, Paddy, Deyell, Mills, and especially Walters were very interested and kind.

Hot Boracic Formentations and a hyperdermic injection of some stuff did wonders for me, though I had many frights thinking I would have to have it taken off higher up or have my knee in

folio 115 recto

[1915] terfered with. The time came when these fears were banished (May 28th) the poison was subdued, and the pain lessened. The tubes were removed on 31st and on June 3rd. I was allowed to get up in the afternoon for the first time. On June 5th. I heard Ben had been wounded and was glad it was only slightly.

On June 7th. I had my first try on crutches and terribly weak I felt. Next day, as Walters who was a great favourite with all was leaving I was carried down stairs to his farewell concert and when Sister Proctor had turned her back I got to the piano somehow and enjoyed some of my old tunes. Next day when in the day room I had the misfortune to fall headfirst out of the invalid's chair which over-balanced and I damaged my leg a bit which made Dr. Crawford cross and it was a week before I was down stairs again.

folio 116 recto

[1915] I had my first peep into the open air on June 18th. when I had tea in the Garden and on the Sunday following I was wheeled round the square by Bissell, in the invalid's chair obtained by Miss Stuart for my convenience. I should have had my first motor drive with Mrs Leslie Ellis but as she was coming up from County Wicklow the car had a break-down, so my first outing was with Miss Ball, one of the V.A.D. Nurses and her friend Miss Blunt. It was delightful to be out in the country again and I remember how peaceful and quiet everything looked. It was hard to believe there was a War on, as the Car passed through the peaceful countryside on the way down to Howth so different from the ruined homesteads of Flanders. We returned by a different route to Miss Blunt's house and seated in the Car Bissell and I dined sumptuously off strawberries and cream."

folio 117 recto

[1915] The next day Mrs. Brown sent her car round to take me to Trinity College Sports and Hutchinson and I had a good time and took some fine photos.

June 27th. Another boat arrived in Dublin from France and Turner and Bears among others came to our Hospital.

June 30th. An enjoyable day was spent at Miss Curwen's little seaside cottage in Sutton. We went down in a Taxi with Miss Stuart, while Bissell and Hutchinson were among the party and what with games and competitions and fortune telling the time passed very quickly and we returned home hoping it would not be long before we came down again.

July 2nd. Went to tea at a Mrs. Young's near Balls Bridge. She had visited me on several occasions and this invitation was the outcome. Had my first game of billiards on a small table.

folio 118 recto

[1915] Every day when I was not invited out I spent the day in the Square being wheeled over in the chair by Bissell, White or Miller. The Square was a private one and access was only possible to the tenants of the surrounding houses. There was an inner green circle of grass where tennis was played and two surrounding walks, an inner and outer. It was a lovely quiet little spot and it seemed the policy of those in charge of the Hospital to get the men out into the Square as soon as they could where the sun and fresh air rapidly completed their patients' cure.

I certainly picked up strength wonderfully quickly and it was not long before I forsook the wheel chair and crossed the road on my crutches, in the use of which I soon became an adept.

On Sunday July 4th, after spending the morning in the Square, Mr. Middleton, The United States

folio 119 recto

[1915] Rubber Co. representative came in bringing me some fine cigarettes. Sunday was a visiting day and many and varied were our visitors, and one had to answer the same old questions time after time. I remember one extremely boring gentlemen who carried about with him a dirty little note book and appeared to be obsessed with the idea that it was necessary for every wounded soldier to write his name and regiment upon its pages. He was a grotesque individual and looked like one of Dickens Characters come to life. As the Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. he brought round a couple sheets of notepaper and a postcard each, shook hands vigorously when he entered and when he left. He took a fancy to me, Why I know not, for I never encouraged him and he seemed to be determined to get me to visit him but by the help of Miss Stuart and my own imagination I forestalled him every time.

folio 120 recto

[1915] Indeed I count it one of my best achievements that I escaped visiting that gentleman. I forget his name but I will never forget him. When I heard him enter the house I seized my crutches and made myself scarce but he would leave a message that he would expect me next Sunday, and Mrs. Murphy next door would like me to come the following Sunday and so on. Yes we had some queer visitors, old ladies with hearts full of sympathy and hands full of toffees were the worst. Cigarette smoking such a bad habit you know, toffee so much better. Tears would appear in their eyes and trickle down their cheeks as they tried to cheer you up. Fortunately I had regular visitors including Mr. Rea and Captain Mann and we would get into a corner and have a good smoke and a chat and defy the sympathy and woodbines of the other visitors."

folio 121 recto

[1915] The questions they asked too were exasperating. They would look at my empty trouser and ask me if I'd lost my leg. However, their visit and their queries were all kindly meant, but I for one liked to be out on visiting days.

On Monday July 5th, we were invited down to Judge Moore's house in County Wicklow with Miss Whelan our night nurse. It was a lovely ride and we were treated splendidly when we got to this beautiful Country House. There were a num[ber] of other soldiers there from other Hospitals and we all had tea on the lawn, arriving back at Mountjoy Square about 7.30.

July 6th. Went in Mrs Ellis's Car with Sister Proctor to Grafton Street Picture House and aft[er] the performance her car called again and took us on to the Shelbourne Hotel (The Adelphi of Dublin) where we had a fine tea in her private room.

folio 122 recto

[1915] July 7th. Went with Captain Mann to look over th[e] Botanical Gardens. The flowers were beautiful and the hothouses were splendid.

July 9th. Went to Mrs. Brown's house in Rathgar. I paid her many visits and she was awfully good to me all the time I was in Dublin. Both she and her two sons, both officers in France at the time of writing this, did everything they could to make wounded "Tommys" happy. She devoted all her time to this end and had soldiers to tea and took them Motor Car drives every day in the week. On her lawn we played target croquet, bowls, and clock golf and we always had our photoe taken during these visits.

July 10th. Went to Dalymount Park with Miss Renny-Taillyour to hear the Irish Horse Band.

There were about 100 soldiers there and we had our photos taken.

July 11th. Went to Findlaters Church and in the afternoon Captain Mann called for Bissell and I

folio 123 recto

[1915] and we went down in a cab to the North Wall and had tea with him on his ship, the S.S.Cork. He showed Bissell the gun which he had on board to defend his boat against submarines, or rather as he would put it, to sink any submarine he saw for at that time he would have given anything to have had a shot at one.

July 14th. One of the best remembered outings of my stay in Dublin took place on this date. Mr. Wilkinson a veterinary surgeon called for us in his two seater car and Bissell, White and I (the two former sitting on the Dicky seat behind) went down with him to his seaside cottage in Rush about 12 miles away. On the way down we called at the Government Remount Station and saw a large number of horses being exercised round a large track. He looked after us splendidly when we reached Rush and we agreed when we got back that we'd enjoyed ourselves immensely.

folio 124 recto

[1915] July 18th. Miss Rita Courtenay was at this time acting as Miss Stuarts secretary and as she poss[ess]ed a little two seater car she often took me about in it. On Sundays we frequently went to

Howth Church in the car. One day Sister Procter Miss Courtenay and I went to Enniskerry and over the Dublin Mountains and we certainly had a delightful time.

July 21st. Went with Turner and Captain Mann to see a game of Polo in Pheenix (sic) Park. Turner was a remarkable fellow. He'd served 29 years. 21 years in England and the rest in Reserve in Canada. He said he was the Champion fowl killer and plucker in the world and guaranteed to kill and pluck a chicken before one could walk across the road, 20 seconds I think he said. I was strongly tempted to put him to the test but the difficulties of procuring a live chicken were too great so we had to take his word. He

folio 125 recto

[1915] was a fine old chap, 53 years of age, and had two sons fighting in France. He'd been wounded in th[e] head by a bomb and it was a miracle how he escape[d] alive.

July 22nd. Red Cross Fete at the Zoo. Had a great time. Met Lady Ball, she had been visiting the Hospital some time previously and had remembered me again.

July 23rd. Went down to Howth to tea at a Mrs. Guinness but did not enjoy it very much. It took any warmth there was out of their welcome when they considered we were not good enough to have tea with them but allowed us to have it with the servants. Shall I give them credit for thinking we would perhaps be more comfortable under this arrangement.

July 24th. On this day I went to the Wounded Soldiers Club at a place known as the Scalp. This Club was founded and run by the Royal

folio 126 recto

[1915] Automobile Club of Dublin, and every day in the week Soldiers were taken in members cars to this pretty little country place about 8 miles from Dublin and quite near Enniskerry. It consisted of a pavilion perched on the side of a hill and a marquee where there were indoor games all sorts in abundance. For the more vigorous cricket nets were provided and footballs. The drawback to the place was that men tried to play these vigorous games when they were not fit and did harm to themselves. I know of one case in which this happened. It was a delightful place and every time I went I liked it better. The company of the boys, the ride there and back through the pretty countryside and the cheers of the villagers of the hamlets we passed through, the flowers we received, and the general good time we had all made us glad to be alive and thankful that we had been sent to Dublin."

folio 127 recto

[1915] Sunday 25th. Went to Malahide Church with Miss Courtenay. We had a puncture on our way back but soon got that put right.

July 27th. Whist Drive at Miss Curwens house in Rathgar. I won the booby prize. All my own fault too. In the interval I'd been showing a friend a trick with the cards and had arranged them in a certain order and when I had finished I forgot to shuffle the cards, with the result that when the play

recommenced I and my partner had two trumps between us and we lost every trick. I took a photos afterwards and Miss Curwen was very pleased with them and ordered quite a number.

July 28th. Went down to the Hiber[n]ian School at Malahide and enjoyed the outing and the welcome we received greatly.

July 31st. Father, Mother and Francis arrived, and next day George and Agnes landed. I had

folio 128 recto

[1915] dinner with them at Mrs. Youngs in Gardiner St. where they were staying. We all went up to Mr. Rea's house in Ranelagh to tea.

Next day Father, Mother, Bissell and I went to Dorset Street Pictures and on the Tuesday Mrs. Brown kindly lent me her car and Mother Francis Dad and I went a drive round Enniskerry and Bray and then had tea with Mrs. Brown at Hopeton, Rathgar. The Family went home on Friday having thoroughly enjoyed their visit.

Aug. 8th. Howth Church with Miss Courtenay.

11th. Tennis Club at Malahide.

12th. Soldiers Club at the Scalp.

13th. Miss Curwens at Sutton.

14th. With Captain Mann to Dorset Street.

Nearly every day I went somewhere and I was improving in health all the time. My leg was going on well but it was a slow process waiting for it to heal up.

folio 129 recto

[1915] Aug. 18th Red Cross Fate at Dublin Castle.

There was a large crowd there and I had tea on the Terrace with Mrs. Brown. The next day I lunched with her and Mr. Frank and Mr. Percy and afterwards drove over the Dublin Hills to Monkstown and Kingstown where we had tea on the lawn of an hotel.

Aug 21st. Croyden Park Tennis Club.

Aug 22nd. Paid a visit to Mr. Oaks little cottage on the Three Rock Mountains and in the afternoon drove down to Enniskerry. Lovely day.

Aug. 23rd. Great Charabanc Drive to Glendalough All the boys went who were well enough and Sisters Procter, Coade, Foote, and Courtenay. We were a happy party and the long journey some 33 miles seemed very short. We had lunch on the banks of the lake and then took a boat and sailed up to the Wishing cave first used by Adam and Eve so our truthful guide informed us and all

folio 130 recto

[1915] who sat in this cave we were told would be married within 6 weeks. I couldn't climb up so I'm still unmarried. We had tea at the Glendalough Hotel and the Proprietor of the place was most anxious to inform his patrons that he was not an Austrian but of Slav extraction. I think I can safely say that this was the finest outing any of us had in Dublin.

Next day July 24th. Issy Smith received the news that he had been awarded the V.C. and there was great rejoicing in Mountjoy Square. A large number of his co-religionists came to see him and bring him presents and the newspapers shrieked Jewish V.C. in Dublin. Of course he had to address meetings here, there and everywhere, and at his request I, with Sisters Procter and Coade went with him to the Theatre Royal where he made two speeches. I may say he was also awarded the Russian order of St. George. We all went to the

folio 131 recto

[1915] Gaiety Theatre with him on the Saturday to see "Betty" and Smith sent her a bouquet from the Boys of Mountjoy Hospital.

Aug 30th. On behalf of the Staff of the Hospital Miss Huxley presented Smith with a silver wristlet watch and I made a speech for the boys. In all his speeches he always referred to the Hospital in glowing terms and we liked him all the better for it.

Sept 1st. Large Party at Mrs. Brown's.

Sept 2nd. Dr. Willis Eustace's. Saw some fine tennis played.

3rd. Hutchinson, Clarke and White discharged from Hospital.

4th. Pictures with Jock Bissell and Captain Mann "Sky Pilot" Hunts Concert.

5th. To Mr. Oakes to dinner. Taxi round Phoenix Park after.

8th. Malahide. Met Miss Victoria Jameson (family

folio 132 recto

[1915] of whisky fame) nice girl, cousin or niece of Sir Douglas Haig. Fine time.

9th. Down at Sutton with Bears. Mr. Kennaghs Car.

11th. Red Cross Fete at Lord Iveaghs grounds.

Met Lady Ball again.

10th Picnicked with Mr and Mrs. Oakes and children at Dalkey Island. Fishing after, caught 4 mackerel in an hour.

15th. Mr. Maconnell (our doctor now, Dr. Crawford gone to France) and a specialist examined my leg with a view to taking away a little more to finish it off properly.

17th. Bissell operated on again.

18th. Went with Hignett and Brown and Miss Stuart to Howth Summit in a professors' car. Fine outing

19th. Unitarian Church with Miss Curwen and spent the afternoon at Rathgar.

21st. Malahide again.

22nd. Rathfarnham Golf Club. Won Putting Prize.

folio 133 recto

[1915] 23rd. Matinee at Empire "Whats Yours" very good.

24th. Drove round Phoenix Park with Risby and Brown in Car.

25th. Watched Football match with Hignett and Brown. Bohemians 3 Shamrock Rovers 1. Good game.

28th. Rathfarnham Castle Golf Links.

29th. Miss Curwen's at Sutton.

30th. Grafton Street Pictures with Sister Wood, Jock, Sweeney, Hignett, Brown and Risby.

Oct 1st. Mrs. Brown's.

2nd. Captain Mann and Jock to Dorset Street. Another boat arrived. 16 men to our place.

6th. 40 mile Motor spin in a Scotch Elder's car and to tea after.

7th. Dad arrived.

About this time it became apparent that my leg would never heal up of its own accord. It had done well, splendidly in fact and these happy days had not been wasted but I wanted to get home

folio 134 recto

[1915] again and to be freed from the Army. I found I could not get home until it was completely healed, but Captain Stuart the head of the Military Hospital King George the Fifth who was very kind to me said he would transfer me to Birkenhead. However while waiting for this to go through I decided to undergo another op[er]ation, my 12th, to finish it off and shortly after Sir Charles Ball and Sir Thomas Miles came down and had a look at it and advised this procedure saying it would not interfere with the usefulness of the knee joint. Dad arrived the day after in Dublin and two days later I went under ether again exactly 25 weeks to the day after amputation. Dr Smylie who performed the operation was present at the first. I got over the effects in fine style and suffered very little pain indeed and 9 days after I was up in the Ward. A week later I was out again, on the 29th to tea with Bissell at Dr. Purcers and next day with him to "

folio 135 recto

[1915] Miss Rialls home near Bray.

Father had gone home again after he had seen me through with the operation but he returned to take me home to Birkenhead as my transfer papers had now come through.

Nov 3rd. Der Tag. Left Hospital with Dad at 8 p.m. after saying Goodbye to the Sisters and Boys, receiving many presents from the former and promised to see them when I got my artificial limb.

With what pleasure I look upon my stay at that place. It was indeed Providence that guided me there. They saved my life, and by the greatest care they saved my knee which will be of much value to me. I was treated splendidly throughout and I bless the day I entered that little Auxiliary Hospital.

Names to be remembered:-

Miss Stuart M.A., Sisters Wood, Procter, Acton, M.K. Ball ,M. Ball, Moinan, Renny-Tallyour, Three Miss

folio 136 recto

[1915] Sandys, Courtenay, Coade, Moore, and many others, not forgetting the cooks who were marvels. As for the boys, well first and foremost were my good friends, Bissell, Bears, Bullock, Brown, (the 4 B's) Hignett, White, Dezell, Mills, Hutchinson, Issy Smith, Melly, Clarke, Turner, Pike, Walters, Waters, Fotheringham, Allan, 2 Davis's, Laffan, Miller, Cresswell, Wilkinson and many others. It was indeed a very happy party.

Then the outside friends, Captain Mann, Mr. Rea, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Eustace, Mrs. Purser, Mr & Mrs. Wilkinson, Miss Curwen, Dr. Osborne, Mr. Oakes and Family, and Mrs. Leslie-Ellis.

Many of the boys I shall never see again but I hope to see many of my other friends and the "Sisters".

folio 137 recto

[1915] HOSPITAL LIFE IN BIRKINHEAD.

Dad and I had a quick and good crossing and soon we were at dear old Wallasey, and there met all the old friends again. I reported myself at the Borough Hospital at 4 p.m. and was soon fixed up in Ward 2. My leg was almost completely healed and they soon finished it off.

I was nearly five weeks at the Borough and three weeks at James Street Convalescent Home. The food at the Borough was very poor indeed, but we had a good deal of liberty and I came home every Sunday in a Taxi. On Mondays we went to the Claughton Picture House, Tuesday, Queens Hall, Wednesday, Gaiety Soldiers Concert, New Brighton, Thursday, Theatre Royal, Friday, Argyle Artistes came to the Borough or Devonshire Place and Saturday we sometimes went to the Shakespeare. We had quite a number of concerts besides and I got thoroughly tired of pictures and shows.

folio 138 recto

[1915] I made many good friends at James Street, amongst whom w[e]re:-

Coates,Smith,Deakin,Biggins D.C.M.,Bell,Hampson,Fish,Salmon,Sharp,Williamson,Sergt.Jackson, and Henderson, and I thoroughly enjoyed myself in both the Borough and James Street.

It was Dec 29th. 36th week, (9 months) after I was wounded, that I obtained my release from the Hospital.

The government have provided me with an artificial limb, which was fitted at Critchley's in St. George Street, Liverpool, and I soon became accustomed to my new means of locomotion. After much trouble, and finally through the help of the Right Hon. Sir Fred Milner, Bart. P.C. I received all the pay due to me and was discharged on March 11th 1916, after being in the service 1 Year and 193 Days.

folio 139 recto

[1915] In closing I might say how satisfied I am things have fallen out as they have done and how fortunate I am, not only to have my life preserved, but to have my health unimpaired, so very different to so many of the poor lads.
