

DIARY – WWI - G.P. Mulchay, Vol. 2, France, 20th March 1917 – 13th October 1917, ST 037406

Transcription of handwritten diary by Sergeant Major Gilbert Payne Mulcahy, written in pencil and ink.

[Front Cover, embossed in gold on leatherette-covered cardboard]

GUERRE

1914-1916

[At bottom left-hand corner]

Carnet de Rouge

DU SOLDAT

DES ARMÉES FRANÇAISES

& ALLIÉES

[Bottom right-hand corner]

Mod. Dépo

[Flyleaf in teal-coloured cardboard, with gold-trimmed pocket for photograph]

[in black ink]

1. Sgt. Mjr G.P. Mulcahy, 6th. Aus. Inf. Bde. Hdqrs. A.I.F.

[sic, Sergeant Major G.P. Mulcahy, 6th Australian Infantry Brigade Headquarters, Australian Imperial Forces.]

[in grey-lead pencil, landscape-orientation]

Edward Charles, Private

12 Belsize Avenue

Murrumbidgee

Victoria

Australia

[end flyleaf]

[in black ink]

Diary No.2.

20/3/17. 7th. Bde [sic, Brigade] staff stayed the night + made things somewhat congested. 21st + 23rd Bns. [sic, Battalions] had a stunt on early this morning to endeavour to take village held by Huns; but it proved to be held in strength + we had to fall back. Enemy M.G's. accounted for ~~150~~ a number of casualties on our side, [arrow up] (10 offrs 260 O.R.) [sic, 10 Officers and 260 Ordinary Rank?] including several Officers. Hdqrs [sic, Headquarters] moved from Bapaume on relief by 7th Bde. to Malt Support (our previous Dugout). 3 Staff Offrs. [sic, Officers] stayed on at Bapaume for night.

Took over our quarters from 5th Bde. Traffic very congested, guns, wagons, cars etc. in a string miles long.

21/3/17. – Staff Capt, B.M. [sic, Brigade Major] + Brig. [sic, Brigadier] arrived about 2 am. Up at 8am + found snow on the ground. Staff Capt. very much out of sorts owing to loss of his despatch box.

22/3/17. Went up to Bapaume to 7th Bde HQ. [sic, 7th Brigade Headquarters] to see if any trace of box; but nothing doing. Met Vern Fowler + later Fat George. Snowed again today. Prince Frederick C. of Prussia brought down in his aeroplane + taken prisoner.

23/3/17. Weather fine but cold. Had a bit of a haircut by one of the boys. Rumours around of the relief of the Division.

25/3/17. Went across to see Jim Cossins + Fred Knight in the Artillery lines near Hqrs. + had a kick of the football – the first for months.

26/3/17 Loaded all our gear on wagon + left Hdqrs. [sic, Headquarters] on relief by 13th Bde. at 10.45 am. Marched via Le Sars, Martinpuich to Mametz Camp + put up in Huts after 7 mile trip in the rain. Found the Camp rather a decent one. Wagon arrived 6pm; unloaded all our gear + settled down. Heard news tonight that the Huns had blown up the Town Hall, + our old Hdqrs in Bapaume after our troops having occupied the place for 8 days. We are indeed fortunate for it was considered too good a place to be left by the wily Hun + while we were there we were most comfortable. However we left the dugout some 3 days ago + now learn that it has been blown up; presumably by some infernal 8 day clock arrangement as it is exactly 8 days since our troops drove the Bosche out of the place + there was a suspicious-looking clock there. Goods [sic] news is rumoured that 7th Bde have taken three villages well-beyond Bapaume. It is very wet tonight + makes one long to be home again around a nice fire.

29/3/17. Rode the Staff Capn'. [sic, Captain's] horse in to Albert to see Monty Boothman + had a long yarn; he had been to Paris, Nice, Monaco, Monte Carlo + Menton + had some lovely views of the places. Walked back to Mametz + was caught in the rain. After tea we had a bit of a spree amongst our Hdqrs chops, music, cards, etc.

30/3/17 Packed up again left 22/Bn [sic, 22nd. Battalion] in Mametz + rest of Bde. [sic, Brigade] moved to Becourt Camp in Huts, a very well-laid out Camp. Completed move by midday. Had the boys out for a parade + stir up during afternoon. Mick Smith came to see me.

1/4/17 Had all Hdqrs. [sic, Headquarters] out this morning + marched them to the Bde [sic, Brigade] Church Parade at which Genl [sic, General] Birdwood + all the knuts [sic, fashionable young men]

were present, + conducted a presentation of medals + ribbons. A very successful turnout. Weather showery. Elected a member of the 24th Bn Sgt's [sic, Battalion Sergeant's] Mess.

Attended Church Service in YMCA. Hut.

2/4/17. Surprised to look out this day + see the snow falling heavily + everything whitened over. The wind is blowing hard + chilly. Fritz aeroplane visited the camp during the night + dropped a few bombs. Elected member of Sgt's. [sic, Sergeant's] Mess, 24/Bn [sic, 24th Battalion] + have a seat near Horace Clough. Found the 24th N.C.O.'s [sic, Non-Commissioned Officers] a decent lot of chaps + the Mess tip-top. 24th Bn. [sic, Battalion] Concert this evening in Y.M.C.A. – a huge success + crowded house.

3/4/17. – Cold + frosty. No mail arrived yet; expecting new Australian mail. A Hun plane destroyed one of our Observation Balloons this evening.

6/4/17. “Good Friday” today. Fine, but cloudy. 24th Bn played the M. Gunners [sic, Machine Gunners] football + won fairly easily. Had a great dinner tonight + the Hdqrs Offices of 24/Bn. were invited to tea.

7.4.17. Inspection by Army Commdr [sic, Commander] (Genl. Birdwood) [sic, General Birdwood] + the Physical Ting [sp?] + Bayonet Fighting Instil. [sic] Staff. Still showery + dull. Enemy planes busy tonight. Had a big mail from home today. America declared war.

8.4.17. Rumored [sic] that the big offensive starts this morning. Weather showery; nothing much doing in our line.

9/4/17. Bde. [sic, Brigade] Stunt on today with the practice attack on Pozieres. Good news from all our front, 4,000 prisoners taken by one of the Corps + a Battn. [sic, Battalion] of Huns taken on another Corps Front. Prisoners coming in very freely. We are in touch now all along the Hindenburg line. + on [sic] our Corps front the last three villages have been occupied so that we are up against the “H.” line. Hope to soon break through as everything points to something big shortly. Cuba declared war agst. [sic, against] Germany according to furphies [sic] today. Fine but cloudy.

11.4.17. Splendid news today on the whole British front. Vimy Ridge taken by Canadians + line advanced between Lens + Arras. 4th Div. [sic, Division] on our Army front assisted by 12 tanks broke through the Hindenburg line + occupied three villages beyond. Had a bit of bad luck today – Capt [sic, Captain] Norman when demonstrating with Hun Trench Mortar wounded in hand + evacuated to 9th C.C. Stn, [sic, Casualty Clearing Station] thus breaking the combination. We are indeed sorry he has gone. Snow fell very heavily again this evening + everything is coated with a white mantle.

12.4.17. Bad news from our front 4th Div [sic, Division] forced back by Hun counter –attack to their original position. A good number of prisoners taken + casualties inflicted by the Bosche. [sic] However the news generally is very good. Move orders issued for Bde. [sic, Brigade] to proceed to Beugnatre [sic](beyond Bapaume) tomorrow. 24th Bn. N.CO's. [sic, Battalion Non-Commissioned Officers] mess wound up tonight very successfully. Packed up all the gear ready for move.

13/4/17. Up at 6am, had an early breakfast. Wagons reported 6.40am + loaded up ready to move off. Got details ready + saw them off in rear of the Bde. [sic, Brigade] Column to march through

Bapaume to Beugnatre. [sic], between 12 + 14 miles. Weather fine but unsettled. A/Staff Capt, [sic, Acting Staff Captain] Frank Bury + self, mounted, rode out about 9am + along main Albert-Bapaume Rd, through Bapaume to Beugnatre. I then rode back to Bapaume to guide the transport to Beugnatre. Met the Major + went on to Vaulx [sic] to take over from 5th A. I. Bde. [sic, Australian Infantry Brigade] but found the 15th Bde [sic, Brigade] in possession. We then scoured the country for suitable accommodation, but nothing doing. Rode to 4th Div HQ. [sic, Division Head Quarters] at Monument Wood + were directed to some dugouts. Finally decided to bivouac for night near old Fritz line in which three of our Bns. [sic, Battalions] are located, 24th Bn, [sic, Battalion] M.G. Coy [sic, Machine Gun Company] + T.M. Bty [sic, Trench Mortar Batteries] in shelters in rear. Put the night in ~~alongside our wagons under a tarpaulin.~~ Very tired and have a headache. Owing to such a long day in the saddle from 9am to 5pm so am a bit sore + stiff. Offrs. [sic, Officers] put up at the Fld Ambulce [sic, Field Ambulance] for night.

14/4/17. Very much better this morning, set about fixing camp + set up an office temporarily to get the weekly returns adjusted. Had lunch + after clearing returns, etc. had orders to pack up ready to move forward. L.M.S. [sic, Lieutenant Major Serving?]+ details remained behind + a small party of us with the gear left for Advanced Hdqrs. [sic, Headquarters] about 7pm. After a long + rough march arrived in the cutting (sunk road) just outside Noreuil to our Hdqrs. dugout, which is by far the worst accommodation we have yet had. However, got the gear off-loaded + sent the limber [sic, two-wheeled cart] back to the Transport line. Put up for the night in a poky dugout of very small dimensions – Brig. + B.M. [sic, Brigadier and Brigade Major] in same joint – Bed about 1 a.m.

15/4/17 Awakened by B.M. [sic, Brigade Major] at 6am + advised re job of work for later on. Just dozing off when the alarm went round that we were being attacked. Dressed + went up top + sure enough there were the Boscher [sic, Germans] coming over the ridge in three waves. It took the Artillery a considerable time to ascertain if they were Huns [sic, Germans] or our chaps. However, the Bosche [sic, Germans] were getting too close for comfort so our details were issued Ammn. [sic, Ammunition] + told off to guard some of the Artillery in the event of the Huns [sic, Germans] coming right on. 22/Bn. [sic, Battalion] got their Lewis Gunners in good position + then the fun began. Bosches [sic, Germans] were all over the place + the 18 pdrs. [sic, pounders] started sniping them. Our Lewis Gunner did splendid work – one party of Huns 7 strong made off at the double but not one covered more than 50 yds [sic, yards] but that he was shot down. A platoon of Huns came forward with their hands up + taken prisoner. Our chaps then went out to bring in the wounded + stragglers. A large number of prisoners were captured + our losses slight. Further on our right the 1st. Div. [sic, Division] were up against it for Fritz [sic, German forces] drove them out of Lagnicourt + took 48 guns. Our chaps re-took it shortly afterwards + also the guns, 5 of which had the breaches blown out. It was a sight I never shall forget to see the Bosches [sic, Germans] getting bowled over + I shouldn't have missed [sp?] the ~~spatel-~~ spectacle for all the tea ~~tea have in China~~ in China. The Hun [sic, German] attack comprised 14 Bns, [sic, Battalions] + over 270 prisoners were taken including 3 Offrs. [sic, Officers] It is estimated the number of enemy dead is approx. [sic, approximately] 2,000. Altogether the stunt proved indeed costly to Fritz. [sic, Germany] Other Units in support heard all sorts of rumours + expected to hear of us all off to Berlin. However we have many a kick left yet. Many wounded have been brought in + are going past. The rest of the day was normal + fine.

16/4/17. Another attack expected this morning, but nothing doing. This is not much of a "posi" [sic, position] as the accommodation is indeed limited. The chaps squared things up a bit during the day.

Rain fell towards evening + made things sloppy + miserable again. Our guns are stirring Fritz [sic, German forces] up ceaselessly. My night up tonight so I turned in at 11.30 am for couple of hours under the Brigadiers bunk.

17/4/17. Up at 2.25 a.m. rather tired but game for anything, am now about to write a few letters. Still raining. Fritz [sic, German forces] is shelling in the vicinity of our dugout + landed one right on top which blew my candle out. However lit up again + got on with my letters to home + Lil as it is a good time, all the others being asleep. Daylight came about 6am + it is still raining. The only event out of the ordinary was the bringing in of two 4th Div. [sic, Division] chaps who have been cut off between Bosche [sic, German] outposts for 5 days. They are worn out so we fixed them up with breakfast etc. + the General questioned them regarding the Huns' [sic, Germans'] dispositions after which they were sent to D.H.Q. [sic, Department Head Quarters] There is a dead Hun [sic, German] in the dugout next to ours + the boys collected souvenirs from him in the shape of Cigarette Case, Matchbox, coins, ring + iron cross ribbon.

24th Bn. [sic, Battalion] had several casualties today through enemy's shelling + one chap was killed just outside our dugout. Nothing else of interest. Am rather tired tonight as I have been up since 2.30 am this morning. Bed at 11p.m. on floor of dugout alongside the B.M. [sic, Brigade Major]

18/4/17. Up at 7am, + on looking out found it to be wet + miserable again + extremely muddy. The rain continued practically all day. Getting a bit fed up.

19.4.17. Had short notice to get out + back to our former posi [sic, position, underlined in red pencil] "for a few days' spell owing to the big stunt being postponed until 26th. 7th Bde [sic, Brigade] relieved both us + 5th Bde [sic, Brigade] + we returned to where the transport are in tents at Beugnatre. [underlined in red pencil] Left the cutting near Noreuil [underlined in red pencil] 6p.m. + walked via Vaulx to camp. Fritz [sic, German forces] shelled Vaulx as we passed through. All buildings levelled + trees cut down. Roads inches deep with mud. Arrived in camp (tents) 8p.m; had some tea + turned in.

20.4.17: Rain kept off + we got on with the good work. Had a few kicks of the football. General Birdwood came to see the General + gave us the news that the next ten days would have a great say in the result of the War as both the French + Germans are putting all their reserves into a very big battle. Good news from all fronts. Rode over tonight to see Mick Smith + found him in good nick [sic, condition]

21.4.17. A heavy enemy bombardment up forward during the morning + our "sigs". [sic, signallers] had to wear their Gas Helmets [underlined in red pencil] continuously for the 1½ hrs. [sic, hours] owing to about 2000 Gas + Tear Shells being sent over. Enemy attack expected; but nothing doing.

Inoculated today against Typhoid, all night job on big Operation Order.

22.4.17. Got to bed 3.30 a.m. + up at 9.15 am. Practice stunt carried out today for our big show. Weather fine but cold. Enemy Artillery very active + the details coming from line had difficulty in getting through the barrage. Hun [sic, German] planes also very active over our area, resulting in many aerial combats with about equal results; one of our planes + one enemy being driven down. Hun [sic, German] planes attacked our Observation Balloons unsuccessfully. Am feeling very much

out of sorts today owing to the effects of inoculation + shortage of sleep; my arm is exceedingly painful.

24.4.17. Fine day. Hun [sic, German] planes fairly active. Rode over to see Mick, but he was out. Nothing startling happened.

25.4.17. "Anzac" Day observed as a holiday throughout the Bde. Cloudy but fine. Very quiet day.

26.4.17. About 10.30pm. heavy bombardment by our Artillery commenced 10.30 pm

27.4.17. Fine but cloudy. Heard this morning Bert's Battn [sic, Battalion] (58th) were at Mametz so immediately after lunch (stewed rabbits) Jim Goldsworthy + myself rode in on horseback through Bapaume + La Boisselle to Mametz Camp. Found the Battn. [sic, Battalion] but was informed Bert had been evacuated on 19/4/17, so our luck was out + we turned back for home, called at F. P.O., [sic, Field Post Office] Bapaume, for tea + mail + arrived back in Camp at 7.30pm having covered over 20 miles. Our Artillery again active tonight.

29.4.17 Packed up gear ready for move of Hdqrs. [sic, Headquarters] to Favreuil 2 pm. Pitched tents + Marquee for Office in a good posi. [sic, position] 21st + 23rd Bns. [sic, Battalions] also moved down handy for the practice of the big stunt. Hun [sic, German] planes busy today; there is a kite balloon handy + it sometimes goes up empty as regards passengers. Polling day today for Commonwealth Elections.

30.4.17. Very fine toady + the sun is quite warm. Got the oil [sic] about our probable move up to the line tonight, so packed up ready.

Rode over to 21st Bn [sic, Battalion] to investigate a record regarding a "Pte [sic, Private] R Mulcahy" joined front Reinfts. [sic, Reinforcements] This chap came from Nth. Melbne. [sic, North Melbourne] + knew Rup; but was not my cousin. Mick Smith came over tonight. At 9pm we received the word "go", so loaded up the wagon + left camp at Favreuil with some of the details at 10.45pm + arrived at our previous Hdqrs. Dugout in cutting near Noreuil [underlined in red] at 12.45am. Fritz [sic, German forces] shell [sic, shelled] the Gully as we came along.

1/5/17 Weather still fine + warm. Turned in at 2.30am. for a few hours "fair dinkum" [sic, honest rest] + up at 8 a.m. Frank stayed up all night. Enemy Artillery (heavies) very active in the Gully + has dinged [sic, hit and dented] several dugouts, etc. Fritz [sic, German force] is employing a new fuse + his shells burst immediately they lob, [sic, throw] resulting in a wide spread of the pieces of shell. "Jenks" had difficulty in getting the grub [sic, food] up tonight owing to Fritz's [sic, German force's] barrage on the gully. My night on tonight.

2/5/17 A bit tired today owing to being up all night. Still fine + warm.

Our Machine Gunners brought down a Hun [sic, German] plane behind 23/Bn's. [sic, 23rd Battalion's] line, the pilot was interrogated at BHQ. [sic, Brigade Head Quarters] by the General + proved quite a different type of Hun [sic, German] to those we have seen so much of. He was smartly dressed + looked rather intelligent. Tonight being "Y/Z" night the General + B.M. [sic, Brigade Major] have left for Adv. HQ. [sic, Headquarters] 10 p.m.

3/5/17 At 3.30a.m. our bombardment started + became most intense; as soon as the barrage lifted the boys went over the bags [sp?] to attack the Hindenburg line; during the course of the day word was received they had attained their 2nd objective + were well in advance of the Hun [sic, German] line. Artillery fire on both sides very heavy + it sounds like a continuous roar. Our Casualties appear to be very heavy. I left Hqrs [sic, Headquarters] dugout + went forward to the Bomb + Ammunition Dump to regulate the issue, etc. + found part of our Dump had been blown out + several chaps killed. I had many narrow escapes as Fritz [sic, German force] was sticking 'em [sic, them] over hot + strong; one piece of shell hit the road + struck me on the knee. A piece caught our cook (Pte Lamb) [sic, Private Lamb] + put him out of action. Lt. Rentoul (our Sig Offr. [sic, Signal Officer] is a casualty) + many others. The Artillery kept up throughout the day + we were busy sending Ammn. [sic, Ammunition] etc. forward.

At about 11 p.m. Fritz [sic, German force] counterattacked our positions + from what I can gather the boys are having a hard time. Wounded are coming in a treat, [sic, a lot] also the prisoners.

4/5/17 Up at 2 a.m. + found the Artillery still going strong. Huns put over a barrage + made 4 counterattacks against our positions but failed. We are established in the Hindenburg line on our Bde [sic, Brigade] front but the Bosche [sic, Germans] are on both flanks. Instrns [sic, Instructions] issued to bomb to right to connect up with 5th A.I.Bde. [sic, 5th Australian Infantry Brigade] On left Tommies [sic, British forces] did not clear Bullecourt but have posts mixed up with Hun [sic, German] posts. Casualties very heavy on both sides. Ours estimated at 55 Offrs [sic, Officers] 1530 ORi [sic, Ordinary Infantry?] Wal Spiller wounded. Very hot fighting Fritzzy [sic, German forces] fighting for every inch; some tough bomb encounters. Artillery active all day. Our troops relieved this afternoon in front line by 1st Bde. [sic, Brigade] + are back in supports, [sic] exhausted + worn out. A few gas shells sent over tonight. [underlined in red] Turned in for a few hour's [sic] snooze but had an interrupted hour or so's [sic] shut-eye.

5/5/17 Weather fine. Couple of Hun [sic, German] balloons [sic] up today. Situation generally quiet. Another bit of a counter attack by Huns this evening. S.O.S. [sic, S.O.S. flare barrage?] sent up in frontline. Repulsed all attacks.

6/5/17. In bed 1.45 am + up again 7am. Very little sleep lately + am feeling very tired. Genl. [sic, General] Birdwood came to see us.

7/5/17 Had a very lively time in our cutting today. Our howitzers [sic, Howitzer Guns] have been emplaced just behind our dugouts + Fritz [sic, German force] seems to have spotted them as he has straffed [sic] our posi. [sic, position] with H.E. [sic, Howitzer Explosives?] practically all day. Our limbers [sic] reported 9.30 pm + we packed up + made ready to move, being relieved by 1st Bde. [sic, Brigade] Went overland through Vraucourt to Beugnatre + on to our old Camp near Favreuil. Rain fell steadily. Turned in about midnight.

8/5/17. Up at 8am, still raining, after breakfast loaded up wagons + vacated Camp at 10.45 am + marched to tented Camp beyond Le Sars. Capt [sic, Captain] Heath from Div. [sic, Division] come [sic] yesterday to act as S.C. [sic, Staff Captain] while Mr Colman is on leave. Had our Office in Marquee. Slept very comfy. [sic, comfortable] in a tent between Frank + self. Rained all the morning.

9/5/17. Rain cleared off + we packed up again ready for move to ~~old Camp at Favreuil~~ Mametz Bde. [sic, Brigade] Camp. Left Le Sars at 10.15am + marched about 7 miles through Martinpuich Contalmaison, Fricourt Circus to Mametz, arriving about 2p.m. very tired. All Bns. [sic, Battalions] in Camp + handy.

Inquired for Fat George but found he had been wounded. Met Frank Jackson + heard Sam Mc Culloch had been killed. Our Bde [sic, Brigade] had a terrible doing, + ~~are~~ is going out for a rest + reorganising. Struck a decent Office in huts + had a couple of bunks in portion of it. Mr. Coleman left on leave.

10/5/17. Rained this afternoon. Capt. [sic, Captain] Heath carrying on as Staff Capt. [sic, Captain] + doing alright. Plenty of work today squaring up records, etc.

11/5/17. Fine + warm. Still plenty of work. Joined 24/Bn. Sgt's [sic, 24th Battalion Sergeant's] Mess.

12/5/17. Attended 24/Bn's [sic, 24th Battlaion's] Concert in Y.M.C.A. [sic, Young Man's Christian Association] Hut. Heard news that Fat George, Jim Spaling + Sam Mc Culloch had been knocked.

13/5/17. Jim Cane puts up his stars. Sid Bates returns from leave.

14/5/17. Frank Bury went to Amiens today. 24/Bn. [sic, 24th Battalion] played 13th. L.H [sic, Light Horse] + caned them up a treat. Had a Thunderstorm today + heavy rain. Its [sic] a treat to see some grass again + the trees beginning to sprout:

17.5.17. Up at 6am, packed up all our gear + made ready to move. Left Mametz Camp 8.20am, Brigade Hdqrs. [sic, Headquarters] leading the column, marched through Mametz, Buire, Lavieville, Henencourt

To Warloy arriving at 3pm. The country is looking splendid all the trees are out + fields nice + green. It is indeed a change to get back to billets after such a lengthy period in the line. The interpreter fixed me up with a decent little room. Settled down in Hdqrs. [sic, Headquarters] in house we prevs [sic, previously] stayed at. 23 + 24/Bns [sic, 23rd and 24th Battalions] are also here. 21st Bn, [sic, Battalion] M.G.Coy [sic, Machine Gun Company] + S M [sp?] Bty [sic, Battery] at Millencourt. 22nd Bn [sic, Battalion] at Bouzincourt. Went to bed at 11 pm + slept in a nice soft bed with sheets the first for ages (a bit rich I fancy)

18/5/17 Up at 7 am; the old lady at my billet gave me a drink of coffee before commencing the day's routine. 24th Bn [sic, Battalion] started the Sgt's. [sic, Sergeant's] Mess again + of course Frank + I participated.

20/5/17. Church parade today at Warloy for 2 Bns + Bde. Hdqrs. [sic, Battalions and Brigade Headquarters] After dinner R.S.M. [sic, Royal Staff Major] William + myself went for a ride on horseback to Contay. Beaucourt + all round the surrounding country, which is looking its best. Spring is in full swing all the grass is nice + green + trees are in blossom + the weather is all that could be desired, so that at the present time it is by no means a bad war.

23.5.17. Weather still very pleasant, + we are having a good spell. Had a game of football today with Hdqrs V the S.M. Batty, [sic, Headquarters Versus the Staff Major Battery] resulting in a win for Hdqrs. [sic, Headquarters] by 4 pts. [sic, points] 24/Bn. [sic, Battalion] had an open-air concert in front of

Hdqrs. [sic, Headquarters] this evening. Tripped a couple of "Sea Lions" + had a tip-top hot + cold shower.

27.5.17. Went all round Bn [sic, Battalion] on horseback to pay details going to Seaside; Warloy to Henencourt + Millencourt, had dinner at 21/Bn, [sic, 21st Battalion] to 22/Bn [sic, 22nd Battalion] at Bouzincourt. Met Mick Smith + had a yarn. Back to Sanlis + home to Warloy.

30/5/17. Attended the Bde. [sic, Brigade] Sports near Henencourt wood + had a very enjoyable afternoon. Had tea on the ground + stayed until 7.30pm to watch the boxing. 23/Bn. [sic, 23rd battalion] won the championship. The ground was an ideal one + everything looked so nice + fresh. All the boys had a tip-top time + appreciated the diversion to no little degree.

1/6/17. 24th Bn. [sic, Battalion] carried out a practice stunt today combining Stokes Mortars, Lewis Guns etc with live bombs. One Stokes Bomb burst when just clear of the gun + killed 5 of our chaps + wounded 12 others. A very sad + unfortunate accident. A military funeral took place this evening + the 24th Bn. [sic, Battalion] followed the bodies to Warloy Cemetery.

3.6.17 Bde football competition commences. 6th F. Amb [sic, 6th Field Ambulance] gave Bde. HQ. [sic, Brigade Head Quarters] a walk-over + 21st Bn. [sic, Battalion] beat 22/Bn [sic, 22nd Battalion] by 3 points. Went for a ride round the country today + put in a good afternoon. Mjr. [sic, Major] Plant went on leave today + Genl. [sic, General] came back from Div. [sic, Division Headquarters]

6/6/17 Bde parade at 10.30am for the presentation of medals + ribbands [sic, ribbons] by the Corps Commander (Genl. Birdwood). [sic, General Birdwood] All the Divnl. [sic, Divisional] Units sent their people for presentations. Genl. [sic, General] Birdwood on inspecting the parade spoke a few words to me + later on I was one of those to be presented with my medal by the General. Andy Fisher was also present + made a speech at the conclusion of the presentations. 23rd + 24th Bns [sic, Battalions] play their football match tonight. It has been very warm today + is now inclined to thunder

12/6/17. Visited Amiens with Mick + Sid Barter. Had to walk about 5 miles to get train at Merricourt + from Merricourt home

14/6/17 My birthday – not kept up in any way. Frank left for Beaulencourt – La Transloy [sp?] area with Advance Parties. Plenty of work + pay day. Weather fine + warm.

15/6/17. Bde [sic, Brigade] marched for Varennes to entrain for Bapaume. Our train held up on a/c [sic, account] of line blown up near Bapaume. We were at station at 12 noon + train left 7.30pm arriving about 10 p.m.

Detrained, saw Snow Butler, [sp?] + marched through Bapaume to tented Camp at Le Transloy.

16/6/17. 24/Bn started their Sgt's [sic, Sergeant's] Mess in the ruined Lugar Factory nearby + of course Frank + I attended.

20/6/17. Showery + thundery nothing startling. Bns [sic, Battalions] engaged in stints round about, village fighting, etc

21/6/17. Rode to Bancourt to see Mick Smith. Found him well + cheery. Boned [sic, borrowed] a new lid [sic, hat] from him.

31.6.17. Still at Beaulencourt under canvas. Weather changeable. Bde [sic, Brigade] Training. Nothing startling.

9.7.17 Showery + windy. Divisional stunt on today all Units taking part. News on hand that the 22nd ~~Ma May~~ May mail sunk from Aust. [sic, Australia]

14.7.17. Mjr. Bridges from 25/Bn [sic, Battalion] reported for duty as a/B.M. [sic, Acting Brigade Major]

19.7.17. Mjr. [sic, Major] Plant left for duty with 4th Div. HQ [sic, 4th Division Headquarters] as GSO. II [sic, General Staff Officer 2nd Class]

22.7.17 Brig. Genl. [sic, Brigadier General] J. Paton reported from England

24.7.17. Packed up + struck Camp at Beaulencourt. Marched 12 miles via Le Sar, Pozieres to Owillers Huts. Very hot day. At conclusion of march went for a swim in lake near Aveluy. Brig. Genl. J. Gellibrand left for duty in England.

25.7.17 Warm again today. Capt [sic, Captain] Norman went to Boulogne per car to see the General off.

26.7.17 Pretty warm today. Went for a swim near Aveluy. Frank + Capt. [sic, Captain] Neath left on advance party.

27.7.17. Busy day today on my own + all the returns due also move order to get out. Bed about midnight.

28.7.17 Breakfast 5.15 a.m. ; transport left shortly after for Aveluy Stn. [sic, Station] + our chaps at 6.30 a.m, arriving at Entraining Stn. 7 a.m. Train left 8.27 am + had a good trip in trucks ta Arques where we detrained + marched about 4 miles to Wardrecques. Found billets in a quiet village + settled down for night. Bde. [sic, Brigade] also billeted in Campagne.

29.7.17. Up at 7am had breakfast + looked around a bit. Heavy thunderstorm this morning.

After tea walked about 4 miles to Rocquetoire (our first billeting place in France) + renewed old Acquaintances. Found Portuguese billeted there. The people were as nice as ever – some place-
Walked home, arriving at midnight.

30.7.17. Capt. [sic, Captain] Norman arrived early this morning.

6.8.17. Rode the mare in to Arques to see Mick Smith + found him billeted [sic] at a place where there were three decent bits of skirt who could parley English. Spent the afternoon walking about then rode back to Wardrecques.

7.8.17 Weather fine again. Marched to Divnl. [sic, Divisional] Baths, Renescure, for a wash. Nothing startling.

8.8.17 Interpreter C. Richard left for 5th Div. ~~Arty.~~ Hdqrs. [sic, 5th Division Headquarters]

9.8.17. Dick Richards left today for duty in England (lucky beggar). Rode in to Arques again to see Mick + had tea with him. Caught in rain on way home.

11.8.17. Sent 5 of our Bde Hdqrs. [sic, Brigade Headquarters] bucks [sic, men] on Blighty Leave [sic, leave to England] this morning. Had a letter from Bert saying he was going on Blighty Leave.

12.8.17 Fine Sunday. Joe Lyons turned up with Reinfct's [sic, re-enforcements] for 21/Bn [sic, 21st Battalion] + came down to see me. We went for a stroll + talked about all the folk at home, etc.

13.8.17. Rode in to Arques again to see Mick; had a yarn + then went down the village + had a feed. Rode home along the canal; a beautiful ride in the cool evening saw all the locks, + barges + chaps swimming in the Canal.

19.8.17. Rode bike to Arques; met Mick at 2pm + strolled in to St. Omer, had a look over the cathedral + then walked to the gardens where a band was playing. The place was crowded, soldiers + civilians a treat; saw a number of the Women's Aux. Corps [sic, Auxiliary Corps] from Blighty [sic, leave in England] dressed in brown – very decent some of 'em – [sic, them] Couldn't get a feed in St. Omer so walked back along Canal to Arques had tea + left Mick about 7p.m, + proceeded along Canal on bike for a distance then stopped to listen to an open-air concert at which I picked up Joe Lyons. Stayed half-an-hour + rode home, tired + hungry.

20.8.17 Tim Richardson + Leo Neagle left for Blighty Leave. [sic, leave to England] Cud had the gloves on [sic, Boxing Match] with the Staff Capt. [sic, Captain]

22.8.17. Inspection of the Divn. [sic, Division] by Genl. [sic, General] Birdwood. Div. [sic, Division] paraded in Column of route + marched along the tow path of Canal from Wardrecques to Campagne + then back to billets.

27.8.17. Practice for inspection by C.-in-C. [sic, Commander in Chief] (Sir Doug Haig) on ground near Campagne.

29.8.17 Sir Doug. Haig. [sic] inspected the Div. [sic, Division] formed up in Mass – a great sight .- Acquatic [sic] Sports to be held in afternoon on Canal postponed, a/c [sic, on account of] inclement weather, until Saturday.

2/9/17 Weather dull + sh~~e~~ brightening up a little. We had an air-raid tonight which made things rather lively for a time.

3.9.17 Squared up in the office + proceeded on leave with George Jebb + Pay Sgt. [sic, Sergeant] Walked about 5 kilos [sic, kilometres] to Ebbingham Stn [sic, Station] + caught leave train about 2 hours late, viz 2 p.m.

We hopped in an Off's [sic, Officer's] 1st class carriage + proceeded to Boulogne, arriving at 7pm, then marched up the hill to Rest Camp. Settled down in Camp + visited the Institutes for some grub, etc.

4.9.17. Up at 7am and filled in time about the Camp. Fell in after lunch + marched up another hill to St. Martin's Camp. Had tea + attended a band concert. Bed at 10pm

5.9.17 Awakened early this morning by the guns firing at some Boche [sic, Bosche, German] planes overhead 5 a.m. No damage. Hope to get away today. Paraded + marched to Docks, embarked + left at 11.50am arrived Folkeston about 1.30 pm.

Caught train to Victoria, arriving about 6pm. Marched to AIF. Hdqrs [sic, Headquarters] + got the "Oscar." Booked room at Riffen's Hotel Victoria + after brush-up, etc left for His Majesty's Theatre – booked stall – to see Chu Chin Chow. Caught bus back to Victoria + bed after a long day. Heard [added in margin] Rain at night + thunderstorm

6.9.17. Up at 7.30am, had warm bath + breakfast. Went round the Strand + dug up Miss Bright, had a yarn, then up to Australia House to see Driver Dawson; went up on roof of building (quite the highest about) + had a good look round London. Went to the British Museum to see Florrie but found she was on holidays. Had lunch then back to the Strand, met Miss Gladys Millar + taxied to Kew Gardens – a lovely spot – went through all the hot houses. Had tea then bus to Hammersmith + taxi to the city. Back to the Victoria + booked my room at Wilton Hotel + ordered two reserved seats for "Cheep" at the Vaudeville + took Miss Bright. Rain again this evening.

7.9.17 Weather fine, but cloudy. After breakfast caught Bus to Newington + called on cousin Kate + stayed to dinner. Rec'd [sic, received] Horace's letter waiting for

me there + later on in day wired him to come to London for a couple of days. Went back to the city about 4 p.m., had tea + met Horrie Clough + George Marshall down on fairlough, so we all went to the Hippodrome theatre + saw George Robey in "Zig – Zag" + thoroughly enjoyed it. Supper after + then back home.

8.9.17. A fine day today. Walked about the Strand + met George Marshall + Horrie Clough at 10.30 am. We then had our photos taken . Caught tube to Hyde Park; spent a little time there then back to dinner. Caught bus to Richmond + went for a row on the river to the Island. Picked up two tabs. Had tea on island then we-rowed back. Horrie + George went to the Hosp. [sic, Hospital] + I saw the girls home to the city. Took Nellie Smith in the car to my hotel + gathered a few togs; [sic, swimming costumes] went to the pictures, taxied to Liverpool St., left Nellie, then tube to Kings Cross where I caught the 10.30 pm train to Edinburgh

9.9.17. Spent all night in train, arrived Waverly 8.15 am + caught 8.35 am train to Dunfermline. Found McGregor's + was made very welcome. Had breakfast then went for a stroll with Mr Mac + jenny [sic] around the Glen + Park a delightful spot + good

weather. A good many sailors about but only one or two Aust. [sic, Australian] soldiers. Back to lunch at 1pm. Went to Church (Baptist) in evening with Mrs M + Jennie, then strolled around the Abbey grounds. Home about 8.30pm. Had supper, sang a few hymns Bed at 11pm in a lovely room. Every convenience in this home.

10.9.17. Up at 8.15 am – hazy but dry today – Went out shopping in Dunfermline . Met Lt. [sic, Lieutenant] Andrew Robertson RN [sic] + wife + with Jenny went to hear the band in the park. Met Wal's Uncle Sam. Later went over Abbey + wrote in Visitor's book. Saw Carnegie's statue + birthplace + grave of king Robert, the Bruce.

In the evening had gramophone + piano going. Had supper 8pm and left for train. The Mac family came to see me off. Train left 8.50pm changed at Waverly + on to Blighty. Had a couple of trips across the p Forth Bdge. [sic, Bridge] Dull + wet in England.

11.9.17 ~~Still Weldon~~ Arrived King's ~~cross~~ Cross about 7.30am. ~~Walked about found he had missed everything.~~ Fixed up in pub – went for a stroll round; had dinner + met Horrie Clough. Went to cousin Kate; early this morning + found a letter from Horrie saying he couldn't get down. Had dinner with H.C. [sic, Horrie Clough] + went to Hyde Park met two girls Weedon (rent [sp?] sisters). Took 'em to tea gathered Horace's ports [sp?] + baggage; walked through Hyde Park, then back to the city for tea; then back to Hyde Park ~~I had to hurry home.~~

Saw Horrie C. off in train at night so am on my own. Bed 11pm. Weather showery in evening.

12.9.17. had bath + breakfast then did some shopping. Had a look at the photos. Bought a ring. Called on Miss Bright. Met "Boofy" Mr Murray + had dinner. Walked around St James Park then back to Victoria. Had tea, went to Pictures, then supper and home. Recd. [sic, received] telegram form Horace saying nothing doing re [sic, regarding] leave.

13.9.17 Up at 8am, [ink re-traced over pencil writing] had break caught bus to N. Green – goodbye cousin – back to city. [pencil only] ~~dinner at~~ [ink over pencil] By tube from Charing Cross to Victoria + met Mr Pash who took me to dinner at [pencil only] ~~Trafalgar Sq.~~ [sic, Square] [resumes in ink over pencil] Army + Navy Stores. After dinner had shave and met

Florrie + Bella Weeden at Vict. [sic, Victoria Station?] It started raining so taxied to marble Arch Picture Pav. [sic, pavilion] then by tube to Trafalgar Sq. [sic, Square] Had tea at Corner House then taxied to Hippodrome to see Zig Zag, caught bus to Vict. [sic, Victoria Station] saw girls [pencil only] ~~home~~ [in ink] on tram. then to bed with the Jaw Ache.

14.9.17 Up at 8am. Weather fine. Went round Strand collected photos then visited Drvr. [sic, Driver] Dawson at Aust. [sic, Australia] House. While there met Mr. Peacock YMCA, [sic, Young Men's Christian Association] had yarn + he had just recd [sic, received] a wire re [sic, regarding] Alf's death. He took me to the YMCA nearby + collected a party then showed us some interesting places in the vicinity, viz. St. Clements Church in Strand, The Temple Bar law Courts, etc. then back to YMCA for dinner. Went down + said goodbye

to

Olive Bright

caught bus

to Victoria.

Had shave, etc. met Florrie + Bella Weeden

Miss D. Morrisson

4 St Bernards Row

Stock Bridge

Edinburgh

xx

At 2.30pm. Bus to Charing Cross then changed to Richmond. Hired boat rowed up Thames to Tea Island. Had tea then rowed back by 8pm. Caught bus to city. Saw girls on train + said goodbye then back to Wilton Hotel 10pm after supper. Busted a gum boil + eased pain a little.

Bed 11pm. Last night of leave.

15.9.17. Up 5am. Vict Stn, [sic, Victoria Station] 6am. Caught 1st train out at 6.15am. Detrained Shorncliffe about 9am + marched to Folkestone red billets in big mansions on sea front. Marched out 11.10am along promenade to Quay + boarded boats about midday. On arrival at Boulogne marched up hill to Rest Camp. Paraded 10pm + marched to train.

16.9.17 Entrained + proceeded to Caestre, arrived 9am + marched to Reinfct [sic, Reinforcement] Camp, saw Monty Boothman got movement order + went to Station, nothing doing in train line for some hours so got a motor wagon to near Reningheld [sp?] + walked to Bde Hqrs. [sic, Brigade Headquarters] at Busseboon. [sp?] Frank was just on his way up forward + the staff following. I packed up rest of gear, loaded on wagons + rode horse about 11pm to transport lines at Chateau Belle. Put up for night at 2 M's store. [sic] Syd + Jenks went to B.H.Q. [sic, Brigade Head Quarters] at Birr Cross Rds. + arrived home 3 am 17.9.17.

17.9.17 Up about 9am, had wash wrote a few letters + took things easy. Went to see Mick Smith + stayed to tea.

18.9.17. Rode round Bns. [sic, Battalions] at Dominion Camp + then to F.P.O. [sic, Field Post Office]; back to Transport 1 pm. Went over to Mick. Nothing much doing here. Capt. [sic, Captain] + Mjr. [sic, Major] Donnelly recd. [sic, received] from leave

19.9.17 Had a word to go forward to Bde. Hdqrs. [sic, Brigade Headquarters] Packed up after dinner + left at 2pm on bike rode through Ypres + Menin Gate along Menin Rd to Hell Fire Corner very appropriately named as it is a terrible place. Shells were rained on road here a treat + got several mules. Dead horses + debris everywhere. Got a move on to Birr Cross Rds + found B.H.Q. [sic, Brigade Head Quarters] dugout. The surrounding country in an awful state holes + debris everywhere. Hdqrs. [sic, Headquarters] in a deep + large tunnel with water continually running in + having to be pumped out. Very hot + smelly down below. Elec. [sic, Electric] light throughout generated by a little motor which stops occasionally to cool off. Rich left for transport lines as not enough room for us both

Had snooze at 11pm

20/9/17 Big attack on today, commencing at 5.40am. The incessant roar of artillery is astounding. Numerous planes + tanks assisting.

Up at 7am. Prisoners + wounded coming in a treat + Artillery going to some tune. Things believed to be going well + our objectives taken.

21.9.17. Our troops advanced about a mile in the attack. Bde Hdqrs. [sic, Brigade Headquarters] moved to a German Pill – box up in Supports in full view of both ours + Fritz's [sic, German's] front line. This was a concrete + rail blockhouse + had been knocked about a little by our guns but still afforded cover in a couple of rooms underneath for our staff + sigs. [sic, signallers] We took very little gear up on pack ~~mu~~ horses

One horse with the typewriter + staty. [sic, stationary] box on board fell in a shell-hole + the staty. [sic, stationary] box got half-full of water. The ground hereabouts the same as the Somme, holes +

debris everywhere. Arrived at Hdqrs. [sic, Headquarters] just at Dusk. [sic] 5th Bde [sic, Brigade] staff still there so not much room + no sleep the first night. Our Bde. [sic, Brigade] relieves the 5th + 7th in the line. Saw Fritz plane brought down in flames.

22.9.17. Settled down as best we could; no room to sling your arms about. Plenty of shells + debris about. Fritz [sic, German] planes active and flying low. Capt. [sic, Captain] Heath got knocked today at 19th Bn. [sic, Battalion] Not much chance of a wash + things anyhow. Turned in at 11 pm on floor of joint.

23.9.17 Awoke on the S.O.S. Signal gong up at 5am. Artillery put up barrage + kicked up a terrible row. Started on a Brigade Order re [sic, regarding] reliefs.

Relvd. [sic, Relieved] by 13th Bde. + we got out with pack horses to Birr Cross Roads, shells following us down, packed gear on to limber + started off down Menin Rd to Ypres. Had a drink of tea at a YMCA. [sic, Young Men's Christian Association] joint + started again for Vlamertinghe, had a lift part of the way in a Motor Wagon, then

walked to our old Camp at Busseboom, arrived tired out at 10pm. Knocked up YMCA [sic, Young Men's Christian Association] + bought some biscuits etc. + had a feed. Found our camp still occupied by 12th Bde, [sic, Brigade] so we put up in the YMCA. [sic, Young Men's Christian Association] hut + after the whole Coy. [sic, Company] of 24th Bn [sic, Battalion] troops in. Things only middling.

24/9/17 Up 7am. 12th Bde [sic, Brigade] vacated our Camp. 9am. Got gear in huts + settled down. Transport + F.P.O. [Field Post Office] moved up to the Camp. Found it good to be in rest again with plenty of room + able to get a wash. Bed 11pm

25/9/17 Had a great sleep. Up at 8am, plenty doing today squaring up back records, etc. Went to Div. [sic, Division] Baths. Met Joe Lyons. Bed at 11pm. Weather fine.

26.9.17. Big stunt by 4/5th Div. in hop. over line near Polygone Wood [sic, Polygon Wood]. 4th Div. [sic, Division] gained objectives, but 5th Div. [sic, Division] held up near Butte de Polygone. Our Bde [sic, Brigade] in reserve still at Busseboom, etc but standing to for the 4/5th Div. [sic, Division]

27.9.17. Weather still good. Fritz [sic, German] planes very hostile, dropping eggs in vicinity of Camp, etc.

28.9.17. Another tip-top day, + our crowd standing to in the Camps. Expect to push up ourselves + do a stunt in a day or so. Moonlight night tonight + the Bosche [sic, German] planes busy over our Camps. Our searchlights got onto a couple + it was great fun to see them in the limelight with the guns at 'em. Only one casualty in 23/Bn. [sic, 23rd Battalion]

29.9.17. Weather still good-oh we expect to move tomorrow morning so paid a visit to YMCA. [sic, Young Men's Christian Association] + got in a few stores. Packed up most of gear + had our last decent snooze.

30.9.17. Pushed off from Camp at Busseboom with our tigers [sp?] + marched through uderdom, [sp?] Vlamertinghe to Ypres where we found our billets in the 'what was once a big Infantry Barracks', but well-pounded for 3 yrs. [sic, years] + just furnishing a little cover. Very dirty +

verminous joint. Fritz [sic, German] plane dropped an egg just outside our window + brought all the plaster + dirt down all over us + blew out the lights.

Pushing off tomorrow, but had an order to get out. I worked till 2am + Jim till 4am.

1.9.10.17 Packed up + left Ypres about 6p.m., caught on with tide through the village via Menin Gate out in to the noise, dust + traffic of guns etc along the Menin Rd, Hell-fire corner to Birr-Cross Rds. arriving at dusk made enquiries for "Y" Wood dugouts as no guide for us. Pushed on along the limber track, shells falling around + our guns kicking up a terrible row. Got up to the Water Pt. [sp?] + saw our baggage off – loaded so left the boys + went overland over shell-holes + past the heavy howitzers all going for their life + asked several chaps for the posi. [sic, position]; no wood there just about two tree stumps + a broken trench with hundreds of shell-holes. Struck the HQ [sic, Head Quarters] dugout + went back for our chaps + gear. Put my foot into a tank sunk in the ground + got wet through to the waist. Got all the stuff up + inspected the dugout which turned out to be wet + dirty + contained people from nearly all Units in the A.I.F. In my part of the joint we had Sigs. [sic, Signallers] + our chaps like sardines.

2.8.10.17. Weather still fine. Fritz [sic, Germans] got one of our Ammn. [sic, Ammunition] dumps nearby + blew a Jamaica nigger [sic, Jamaican person] into the middle where the poor blighter got burned to death.

Left "Y." Wood about 8pm in company with the Staff Capt [sic, Captain] + dodged a few on our way to Adv. B.H.Q. [sic, Advance Battalion Head Quarters] in a battered pillbox at SANS. SOUCI, which placed received some attention [?] during the night in the way of two direct hits + some wide ones. But Fritz [sic, Germans] knew how to build these joints for which we are grateful as the solid reinforced concrete walls hardly show the marks of 5.9's. [5 pounder shells?]

3.8.10.17. Had a doss on the floor of a poky little dugout with several other. [sic] Had some grub from Offrs Mess [sic, Officers Mess] very acceptable indeed. Our Artillery chucking over the iron rations to Fritz [sic, Germans] a treat.

4.8.10.17 Zero 6 a.m. Fritz [sic, German forces] put down a barrage at 5.25 am + we found Fritz [sic, Germans] intended attacking on our Front at exactly the same hour as our stunt; but our barrage got in amongst him + chopped him up to some order. Our troops 22nd + 23rd Bns [sic, Battalions] gained RED line by 7.40am + prisoners + wounded commenced coming through. 21st + 24th Bns [sic, Battalions] passed through + captured Blue Line by 10am. A great success for our Bde. [sic, Brigade] all objectives taken + being consolidated the Units on right + left flanks also did well. Our Casualties heavy; but Fritz [sic, German side] must be considerably more. S.O.S. up along front in evening but our Arty. [sic, artillery] dispensed the Huns [sic, Germans] + broke counter-attacks.

5.8.10.17. A good view of the line from HQ. [sic, Head Quarters] + our chaps are on the highest ridge + got Fritz [sic, German forces] well down the other side. One group of Offrs. [sic, Officers] sent in prisoners are a [sic] Hun Bn. [sic, German Battalion] Comdr [sic, Commander] + staff + 3 Arty. Offrs. [sic, Artillery Officers] Captured two guns, M.G's, [sic, Machine Guns] etc. Our guns going forward + plenty of business carting Amm. [sic, Ammunition] etc. Very dirty weather now rain, cold + mud, so things are not of the best. However we are better off than the poor chaps in front. Plenty of Arty. [sic, Artillery] activity tonight.

6.8.10.17. Still raining, cold + wet. A chap has the blues as we are not being relieved. Our chaps are on a burying cable job today after their stunt (stiff luck) + we expect to do another hop over before going out. Jim came up to Adv. H.Q. [sic, Advanced Head Quarters] Turned in on the floor about 10pm. Awakened about midnight by a loud explosion on roof, which extinguished our lights + gave us a bump. It was a direct hit by 15cm. Fritz [15cm M16 Cannon shell, manufactured by Fritz Neumeyer.] + dug a big hole just above my head into the brickwork + earth but did not penetrate through the concrete. Lucky for us Fritz built these solid joints as otherwise we would all have gone South.

7.8.10.17. Still wet + muddy. Position quiet around Sans Souci with except [sic, exception] of the noise of our own Arty. [sic, artillery] The wind is getting cold + bleak + this is really a touch of Winter. Will not be sorry when we get out so that we can have a change of togs [sic, clothes] + a decent wash.

8.8.10.17. Conditions much the same. Got out orders for attack tomorrow morning. Hostile aircraft very active over our lines this morning about 8 of them came in a bunch after some of our scouts who easily evaded them. Am thankful a chap is under cover for today + towards evening it is raining a treat + poor chaps come in up to the waists in mud. Capt [sic, Captain] Savige left to assist in laying out the J.O. Tapes [sic, Jump Off Tapes]

9.8.10.17. Attack commenced at zero 5.20 am with our usual arty. [sic, artillery] barrage. Red line (1st obj.) [sic, objective] gained about 7.30 am, + 5th Bde. [sic, Brigade] on left advised they have also gained their obj. [sic, objective] (9am) so everything seems O.K. up to present. Rain has ceased now, but it is still cloudy + unsettled + muddy under foot. Great aerial activity this afternoon both our planes + Fritzs [sic, Germans] not far short of 100 up at a time. An exciting scrap took place between two resulting in a Fritz [sic, German] machine being set alight by our plane's M.G. fire; the observer jumped out + fell to the ground from a great height followed by the burning machine. One of our planes came down heavily in our lines as the

pilot had been shot in arm + on landing he broke both legs. About 5.45 pm S.O.S. along the front followed by our barrage. Our troops gained their first objective + met with a severe resistance in vicinity of Daisy Wood. Very heavy casualties especially regarding Officers. Poor old 24/Bn [sic, 24th Battalion] also 21/Bn [21st Battalion] got it in the neck. It was too much to expect of the troops after the hard time they have experienced + the weather was decidedly against them.

10.10.17 Relvd [sic, relieved] today by 4th Aus. Div, (13th Bde) [sic, 4th Australian Division (13th Brigade)] + got clear of Sans Souci about 5pm after loading gear on pack animals. Walked on duck board track to Menin Rd. through water-logged + broken ground over which our troops had advanced easily in the month. Reached Hell Fire corner in time to run up against some heavy stuff Fritz [sic, German side] was sending over. It was dark then so pushed on to Ypres + had a hot drink at Comforts then through village + on to Chateau Belge where we arrived 9pm. Headqrs [sic, Headquarters] in what was once a decent Chateau. Went over to see Mick who was camped nearby + found him in bed. Back to the Chateau, squared up

[Sketch in grey-lead pencil of an Australian soldier, in profile, facing right, wearing a slouch hat.]

+settled down for night.

11.10.17 Spent the coldest night for months as had only one blanket + no windows in the room, door left open + breeze blowing in a treat. Up at 7am and got well into our back work. Frank went on with advance party to Steenvoorde. Saw Mick again + had a yarn. Got orders put for move tomorrow. Made a more comfortable bed + turned in.

12.10.17. Up 6am, packed up + left Hdqrs. [sic, Headquarters] with all details at 8am, marched to Ypres, + entrained in trucks for Abeele (whole Bde, [sic, Brigade] or what was left of 'em) in one train. Transport went via road. Detrained at Abeele 12 noon + marched Steenvoorde 5 miles, arriving 2 pm. Found Hdqrs. [sic, Headquarters] in old posi. [sic, position] + settled down; had decent billet bed + a tip-top sleep. Still raining.

13.10.17 Up at 8am, spruced up + put in a hard day on back work. Decent place this plenty of shops. Still raining. Bed 10pm

[page torn out]

[back fly-leaf in teal-coloured cardboard]

[written in grey-lead pencil, landscape orientation]

Charles Steel

12 Belsize Avenue

Murrumbena

Victoria

Australia

[back fly-leaf in teal-coloured cardboard, with gold-trimmed pocket for photograph]

[back cover, with tan faux-crocodile leather over cardboard]

[end, Diary Volume 2]

Transcribed by Nina Buchan for Museum Victoria, July 2014- Feb 2015