

Diary of Driver G H Ewart, 4th Field Artillery Brigade¹, Volume 1

Private Address

“Erindale” 57 Erin Street,
West Richmond,
VICTORIA, Australia

- (1915) Embarked at Port Melbourne on 18th November 1915 on the troop ship S.S. Wiltshire. Passed the heads at 3.30, passed a troop ship in the Bay.
- Nov 19 Nothing of importance. Canteen was opened. I was on E Troop deck.
- Nov 20 Passed a steamer 6.15 am. Exercised horses and did a bit of signalling in the afternoon.
- Nov 21 No church parade was on morning afternoon and evening stables.
- Nov 22 Passed three ships and sighted land at 5.30 pm. First time since leaving Victoria. We called in at Albany 10.30 pm. A case of measles on board which we left there and a few other cases of sickness. We left again at 11.30 pm.
- Nov 23 Stables in the morning. Sig. in afternoon. Passed two ships during the day. We had sausages and onions for breakfast. Boiled rabbits of dinner and tripe for tea.
- Nov 24 Very calm up to now. In stables all day.
- Nov 25 Washing parade from 6.30 am till 9.30 am. We had harness competition in which I got second fastest time. Record time 11 minutes.
- Nov 26 Stables all day except for an hour in afternoon when we had a kit inspection.
- Nov 27 Vaccinated at 8.30 am. In stables again. We had boat stations where all on board was allotted boats in case of accidents.
- Nov 28 Stables till 7.30. Church parade at 11 am. Afternoon holiday taken up by letter writing.
- Nov 29 Stables after breakfast brought horses up on deck for exercise. On guard at 4.00 pm.
- Nov 30 Nothing of importance.
- Dec 1st Parades altered on account of heat. 6.30 till 7.30 am, 9.30 am till 10.20, 2.30 pm till 3.30 pm. My poor old horse died during morning. It was like losing one of my mates. It was pneumonia. Baths erected on board for troops.
- Dec 2nd Washing parade the same as usual No parade on a/c of heavy rain was paid 10/- Passed a troopship during the day loaded with horses.
- Dec 3rd Stables all the morning Lecture on driving and battery signals. Lost sight of troopship at 4.30 am passed another steamer in the afternoon.
- Dec 4th Stables again. Lecture on Battery manoeuvres. Boat station practice in afternoon. Gun practice at target by sailors with 4.7 inch gun.
- Dec 5th No morning Parade at 6.30 am Church parade at 11 am Letter writing in afternoon.
- Dec 6th Stables again. Passed a mail steamer bound for Bombay at 9 pm. Boxing Championship of the Brigade held. Won my heat 3 rounds.
- Dec 7th Rifle drill 6.30 am till 7.30 am. Stables again part of the morning Boxing contests continued. Land sighted at 4.30 pm. East coast of Africa. The Column held a concert at night.
- Dec 8th Lecture on Brigade Locations on the field. Signalling again as every man has to have a fair

¹ Claude Harold Ewart enlisted on 14 August 1915 and returned to Australia on 24 December 1918. Two volumes of his diary are held in the Museum of Victoria's Arms and Armour Collection. The second ends in October 1917, towards the end of the disastrous Paaschendale offensive. Whether Ewart continued his diary beyond that time is not known.

The transcription that follows was made by Ailsa and William Stent, of Lockwood South.

The diary has few paragraphs and little punctuation, these have been added and minor spelling mistakes, especially of place names, have been corrected.

At some time in May or June of 1916, Ewart seems to have lost a month and in about October of the same year he wrote 'I am not going to trouble about the dates now, only on special occasions'. An effort has been made to correct and insert some dates, the corrections being shown in brackets.



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- knowledge of signalling. Passed by Mail steamer at 4 pm. Aden sighted and Passed at 11.30 pm where signals were exchanged and search lights trained on us.
- Dec 9th Land still in sight at 6.30 passed several ships during day one being horse boat from Cairo. Washing day again. Plenty of flying fish and passed a shoal of Dolphins. Purim island is a coaling station for Nary and trading ships as is also strongly fortified. Entered the Red Sea. We saw the town of Mocha which is noted for its coffee. It is an old Historic Place all white buildings like sand stone. It was built hundred of years ago. It is on the W coast of Arabia. Passed another ship 10 am. We passed some more uninhabited islands which are very barren. You can see nothing but huge mass of Brown rock. We passed a large rock with a lighthouse on it. We passed some more islands which are called the twelve apostles and on one of these is a lighthouse.
- Dec 10th Physical Drill from 6.30 am till 7.30 am Passed a steamer at 7 am. No land in sight. Lecture on Battery work in the field. Lost the Brigade Championship on Points. Middleweight strained my wrist. Kit inspection to see that all had his full equipment. Stable piquet.
- Dec 11th Land sighted at 7 am which is very mountainous. Lost light of land at 12 noon. Sighted land again at 4.30 pm and still in sight till dark.
- Dec 12th No morning parade at 6.30 am. Passed two ships during morning. Land still in sight on each side of us. We are in the Gulf of Suez. Passed 5 islands of rock a few lighthouses.
- Dec 13th We arrived at Port Lewfik and anchored at 2 am. I was on guard. I was looking after the ship's Doctor. He was mad. I had to keep him in bed. Suez could be seen in the distance. There were a great number of ships in the Port and a lot of troopships and a few War boats. The 5th F A was on one from Sydney. This is a great shipping place. The entrance to the Canal is here which could be seen. It is guarded by war boats. A couple of them passed as we stood at the salute. A lot of natives came round us in boats selling cigarettes and oranges. They are a dirty looking lot. They are terrible cadgers. We threw some pennies overboard and they pounced on to them and then we threw some red hot ones down and then the fun began. We bought a fight between two A then
- Dec 14th Still in Port Lewfik. Fruit and chocolates were got on board to be sold at canteen . Our Universal Kit Bags were issued to us & 48 Laruss rations for Wed and Thursday.
- Dec 15th Drew in alongside of wharf at 7.30. I was the first to put foot in Egypt with my horse. I was first off the boat. Put them straight in the train and went on board again. Disembarked again at 12.30. Left Suez for Heliopolis at 1.30. Arrived at Cairo at 9 pm. Strained my chest also splintered my Breast Bone at station (Zeitoun). Arrived at Heliopolis at 12.50 midnight. Tents had to be put up was very bad. Blankets issued to us. Got into bed about 2.30 am.
End of diary book 1.





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