

WORLD WAR 1 DIARY 1914 - 1917

**THE REVEREND
PHILIP PARSONS WATKINS GENDALL
1886 – 1960**

**1914 -1916
PRIVATE (THE REVD.) P.P.W. GENDALL
7th FIELD AMBULANCE
3RD DIVISION
BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE**

**1916 – 1917
THE REVD. P.P.W. GENDALL
CHAPLAIN TO THE FORCES
DIVISION:
4th SUFFOLKS
1st MIDDLESEX
18th MIDDLESEX**

This Diary was written in 1917 from pocket diaries carried within the first three years of the First World War.

There may be some who will find it dull; fact without fiction is wearisome to those who know not the man of few words, with a complete lack of ostentation. He often regretted in later years not seeing the war through, saying that it was one of the great mistakes of his life (a chaplain could retire at the end of one year's service). There were others who thought differently. There were more distinguished men than he, but with the same ideals, who collapsed under the strain of that terrible war, there is much to read between the lines during the R.A.M.C. years. He was mentioned in dispatches.

M.E.B.G. January 1962

WORLD WAR 1 DIARY OF THE REVEREND PHILIP GENDALL

Written up June 1917. Collated and re-written by Evelyn Gendall, January 1962.

This version contains some Flemish place-name corrections kindly provided by Sharon Uyttenhove of Quasimodo Tours in Oostkamp, Belgium (www.quasimodo.be) who provide excellent Great War guided tours. The original spelling is highlighted and the modern spelling provided in green.

A Parson's two and a half years at the Front.

1914. The outbreak of war found me at Sibsey. It was the last few days of my summer holiday. A few days previous I had been in town and attended a big meeting in Trafalgar Square to protest against England joining in the war. Speeches were made by George Lansbury, Will Thorne, Cunningham Grahame, and others. The Embletons were at Sibsey – and great excitement was caused whenever khaki clad warriors passed along the road. Little did I think that before long I too would be a soldier. The return to Coventry brought a change of outlook. The vicar saw at once the significance of the war. That Germany stood for Oppression and Absolutism and that the future of Freedom and Democracy demanded the intervention of Britain. On the way from Sibsey to Coventry I had to wait some time in the station at Peterborough. While waiting a troop train passed through and stayed a little while in the station. With what awe I peeked at those khaki clad men!

From the beginning the “Clarion” was all for England to support Belgium and fight Germany. Various influences combined to make me realise that I might have to do something. So in September I wrote to the Bishop and to the Chaplain General. The former gave me his consent to take up Chaplain's work. The latter sent a cold formal acknowledgment. A month passed by and nothing happened. The Bosches meanwhile were advancing steadily through Belgium and northern France. So, after much thought, I decided I would become an ordinary soldier if I could. My 3 ½ years apprenticeship in the foundry at Penzance made me think I might do well in the R. Engineers. So I communicated to my Vicar my intentions of offering myself for enlistment in the ranks. There were three of us at St. Peter's and we all agreed that one of us ought to go. But no one else seemed anxious to take any steps. Felix, as it turned out after, was very much in love with P_____, and secretly contemplated marriage. So naturally he didn't want to go. And the Vicar was too old and too much needed in the Parish. So it resolved itself into my going.

The Vicar proposed caution, and counselled me to write first to the Bishop. This I did, and he sent a letter with mine. I shall always remember the restless night I had after posting that letter. Visions of dirty working men – and sleeping amid filth and discomfort – floated before my eyes. So that when shortly the Bishop's reply came refusing absolutely to sanction my joining the combatant ranks, I was very relieved and gladly submitted. Still I was not satisfied, and when one evening Mrs Collington said

“Mr Gendall, why don’t you join the R.A.M.C.?” I knew I should get no more rest. Shortly after I went to London to take the Services at St. Agatha’s, Shoreditch, while Everard Digby preached at St. Peter’s for the Harvest Festival. I stayed of course at “Woodhouse Grove” (home of my great friends, Palmers and Stokes). On the Monday morning I had breakfast in bed, and Winnie sent me up the “Daily Citizen” (since defunct) to read. In this I found a small paragraph to the effect that the Vicar of Streatham (Mr Brook Jackson) was acting as adviser and secretary to clergy who wished to enlist in the R.A.M.C. I wrote to him straight away, and received his reply soon after returning to Coventry. He arranged for me to meet his co-operator and several other priests at Lambeth Town Hall on the 16th October. So early in the morning I left Coventry. The Widdingtons and several others from St Peter’s saw me off. Kathleen Bailey and Edith Hobbins on their way to work walked most of the way to the station with me. At Lambeth I met Harding, Evans and W. P. James priests and Bert Green and Alec. Friendly Baptist lay workers, who afterwards became great friends. The recruiting officer advised us not to enlist till the following day (Saturday) so that we might have the weekend to ourselves. So I went to East Ham for the night and the following morning we all “took the shilling” together. The medical examination etc. was a bit of a shock, but we were all keen and ready for anything. On Monday the 19th we reported at Camberwell Grammar School where we were joined by Betteridge, an Oxford man and Cuddeston student and marched with band to the tram. Thence to Waterloo and Aldershot.

19th October 1914 to 19th January 1915 at Aldershot

Our training lasted just three months. We parsons and Bert and Grindlay lived together in one of the married quarters in A Square, R.A.M.C. Depot. Merrikin, a queer old parson, and Stewart a Scotchman joined our mess and we had a happy time together. All were as keen as nails and anxious to become good soldiers. Drills, parades, route marches, fatigues, filled up our days. Sound sleep at nights. We slept on the floor and there was seldom any rations left over. I found great help in St George’s (garrison) church – whither I often went to the celebrations that were held daily and frequently on Sundays. Toward Christmas a mission was held in the place by the Revd Hubert Jones C.F. and we all did something to help. I celebrated a few times at St George’s and preached one evening at the Redan hill camp. An awful place – a sea of mud and lousy blankets, and horrible food. We were much more fortunate at the barracks.

Lectures and studying of the “Green Book” became a big item – especially on wet days. Stewart and Evans, the little Welsh priest were the funny men of the party. Merrikin provided much amusement by the way he dodged parades and work generally. “Scottie” (Stewart) taught us the song of “Sweet Annie Moore” with which we passed away many a dull hour and enlivened many a route march in Loffan Plain. Harding was the serious member. He “really couldn’t understand Gendall.” The latter didn’t seem at all keen on the “hardening process” – he liked beer, and even swore sometimes!

From time to time I went for a short weekend to East Ham. On one of these Evelyn joined me there, and we fixed up the marriage arrangements. We had had the banns

called immediately I left Coventry. Felix and Prue were married about the same time. We were married at Sibsey on the 22nd November. I had leave from Aldershot from the Saturday to the Tuesday. A very quiet affair it was. Only Geoffrey and Grace and Evie's father and mother and Violet Ketten were there. We had pork pie for breakfast, and I was wearing the blue uniform of Kitchener's Army. Mr Besant made me make my will and gave us the Communion of the sick by way of a Nuptial Mass! On my return to Aldershot I was greeted on parade next morning with remarks of "Many happy returns Gendall".

At Aldershot I got to know the Morton brothers – sons of a parson, and me a deacon who had cut and run to join the Army.

We all passed our class examination satisfactorily and duly received the additional 6d per day for proficiency in First Aid.

Christmas Day 1914

We had to stay at Aldershot till the following day. I was allowed to assist the priest at a neighbouring mission district (St. Augustine's, New Town) and slept there the preceding night. I celebrated at 7 on Xmas morning and assisted at 8 – arriving back at barracks in time to miss Church Parade. How I hated Church Parade. It was all parade and no church. Three hours red tape and half-an-hour's worship. The latter consisted of mutilated Matins with a sermonette by a thin curate with a falsetto voice. He wasn't a bad fellow though as I found afterwards. By this time he has been to the Front and will doubtless have learned many things and "unlearned" many more. Merrikin managed mostly to dodge church parades – and I don't blame him. One morning at pre-church-parade inspection we were informed by a young lieutenant that we were a 'damned disgrace'. And so to church! as Pepys would say.

From 26th December to 5th January was on leave at Coventry. Evelyn came too. It was a busy ten days. The 12th January I was "put in draft" to go to the Front, to my great delight. We had been longing to go – thinking that if we didn't the war would be over without our seeing much of it. Evans who was at this time in duty at the Cowbridge Hospital was not included in the draft and was so crestfallen that he sought and later obtained a commission in the combatant ranks. We had all been painfully inoculated and into Basvaccinated and spent the next few days parading for kit. What a terror those parades were. You waited hours maybe in the bitter cold and at the end, "drew" a toothbrush and a lanyard!

Alec Grindly was also omitted from the draft – he afterwards went to Egypt and became a Staff-Sergeant. Later he took a commission and died of Cerebro Spinal Meningitis. (R.I.P.) On the 16th (Saturday) we were given a short week-end leave, and I turned up unexpectedly at Sibsey. Monday the 18th was our last day at Aldershot and after a special Mass in the Garrison church we departed from a siding at Aldershot at midday of the 19th.

Detained at Southampton, and hung about some time. Left finally in the S.S. "Caledonian". This was the beginning of a certain disillusionment. I imagined volunteers going to the Front would be treated somewhat heroically. But the dirty ship and the scrambling for food – and later the herding in trucks – "Hommes 40 Chevaux 8" – speedily upset that idea. We sighted the coast of France off Le Havre on the morning of the 20th with keen emotions. Landed about 12 and marched with much perspiration to Base 3 near a little village called Rouelles, where we were squashed 15 in a bell tent. 15 men and 15 lots of equipment. Mud and cold.

20th to 25th January 1915

We lived in the mud. Despite it all Harding stuck to his cold bath. At Aldershot he used to sit in the sink and let the tap run down his back – and make an awful mess on the floor which remained all day generally. Great amusement was caused among the tents to see our hero dashing along in the mud stark naked – the hour being early and the frost keen. Frequent medical examinations were held, and we were all parcelled out into Base men and Front men. I was put among the latter, the iron man among the former!

Sunday 24th was rather sad. There was a sweet church bell ringing in the village which brought home memories – but the only Service we had was a kind of Evensong at 5.30pm in the mess room. Here I had my first of many experiences of an estaminet – the drink was cidre – quite good and quite cheap.

Monday 25th. Left for the Front. In the same draft with me were Bert Green and Jones. We marched at night time to the station at Havre and were put into trucks labelled:-

"HOMMES 40 CHEYAUX 8 (EN LONG)"

There were 27 "hommes" in my truck and 27 sets of equipment and food for 27 "hommes" for three days! Heaven only knows what would have been the state of the interior if we had had the maximum load of 40! We managed to "pinch" some hay to make the floor more agreeable – but even so were not all able to lie at full length. We spent the whole night getting to Rouen – jogging along – and shunting back – half asleep, half awake, plenty of filthy language, and the minimum of comfort.

26th January. At Rouen. We halted here for the day. Cooked our breakfast in our mess tins on the railway line. The weather was sunny and beautiful. I sat down on a pile of sleepers and got a large patch of tar which soaked right through greatcoat and to my innermost garments. To our great delight we were allowed to go into the City. Bert Green and I spent the day walking around. The Cathedral was very glorious. Our first experience of the beauties of "La Belle France". Unfortunately we had no money. When we had bought a drink of coffee we were penniless, and we could have spent so much.

Another night in the train brought us to dirty Boulogne-sur-Mer where we spent a similar kind of day. Wandering about penniless extracted interest and amusement from watching the French people – living on biscuits, bully and water. Another night on the train

brought us to Bailleul on the morning of the 28th January. Now our active service began. As we waited to march off we noticed little white puffs in the sky and wondered what they were. Later “Ardines” became our everyday sight. From Bailleul we marched across the Franco-Belgium frontier to the little village of Locre where we joined the 7th Field Ambulance, which then had its headquarters in the convent. How we enjoyed that march, after being cramped up in the train! Arrived at the convent we were given a grateful meal of hot “Macharicie”. It seemed the most delicious food I had ever tasted – though later I learned to be more wary of it. We were billeted that night in a very airy barn – it was awfully cold, and to wash next morning we had to break the thick ice on the pond. Few washed or shaved that day.

29th January. The draft was lined up – asked their civil professions – and apportioned jobs. ‘Clergyman’ sounded strange among all the ‘clerks’ and ‘Labourers’. Bert and I were put into “C” section – James into “A”. In consideration for my civilian calling, I suppose, I was put in the nursing section and began my duties that night in the dressing room. My first experience of wounds. On duty all night – my two outstanding impressions of that night are “Blood and Groans”. I held a big man’s leg while it was being dressed, and his blood ran all over my hands and nearly made me sick.

For some time we were on night duty. By day we slept in a barn of the convent – it was very cold and dirty – and the straw was full of bully beef tins, and half empty tins of jam and bones, and biscuits, and gravy and bits of fat. I lay next to “Mollie” Morgan – a regular soldier and a nice boy whose sympathy made things much easier. By night my sleeping room was occupied by Bill Rains, with whom afterwards I became such friends. At first the men could not realise that a real genuine parson could ever be a private soldier.(We were one of the first drafts of Kitchener’s army). Conversations like this used to take place:

Pte A “Who is that bloke over there?”
Corporal B “Oh he’s a parson”
Pte A “Not a pucca parson?”
Corp. B “Oh yes”
Pte A “What pucca C. of E.?”
Corp. B “Yes”
Pte A “Blimey!”

In time they got used to the idea, and treated me with absolute camaraderie. They refrained as much as possible from bad language when I was about, but didn’t treat as someone apart – and I shall always be proud of my friends of the ranks. Mollie took to calling me “Gen” – for everyone in the army has an army name. A few examples are: “Dusty” Miller, “Nobby” Clarke, “Timber” Woods, “Bumper” Hunt, “Brigham” Young, and such names as “Rum-tot” for a boozing sergeant, “Yatey” for Yates, “Nobbler”, “Quarter”, “Tiny” for any tall person and so on. Morgan would tell me yarns of the army in peace times as we lay shivering in the day, unable to sleep.

The chapel in the convent was a frequent place of refuge for me. I went there daily to say my devotions, and often stayed for “Exposition” – the chanting by the boys and girls sounded very sweet, and the presence of God seemed to dwell in it.

The C of E services were held in the big hall of the convent. When the chaplain who lived with the ambulance found he had two priests among his flock, he started a daily mass, and it was a supreme delight to be able to celebrate fairly frequently, and sometimes to preach. The idea of a “private” preaching was so novel to the other men that they usually turned up in force whenever Jones or Gendall preached. I shall ever be grateful to that chaplain – a Mr Peacey formerly of Burton-on Trent.

Chess was a great joy in those days. Soon we got quite a little coterie of players – Jones, Hort, Rains, Corporal Fern, etc. It was useless going out in the evenings. All the estaminets would be full, and reeking with fumes of beer and tobacco and full of noise. Later when the weather became finer it was different. In those days there were no Y.M.C.A., or Church Army, huts, or E.F. canteens. Whenever I got a chance I played football to get exercise, and occasionally went “on pass” to Bailleul, where there was a quiet little estaminet kept by a quiet, sweet-faced, French woman. The quiet of it was heavenly to me. Days passed fairly uneventfully. Life settled into a regular routine. In time I got to loathe the waiting to receive the wounded. It all seemed so hopeless. You knew that every night a fresh batch would arrive.

The following is a reproduction of my pocket diary for the period at Locre with additional notes from memory:

30th Jan. Sat. Off duty all day. Quiet night. Met Chaplains.

31st Jan. Sund. Mass in convent at 8. Service at 7pm.

1st Feb. Monday. 24 hours off. Warm today, hanging about all day.

2nd “ Nice day in hospital. Went to exposition in convent, enjoyed it very much.

4th “ Thurs. 24 hours on duty. Very tired. Lots of wounded – some very terrible.

6th “ Sat. Night duty. Saw arm amputated. Horrible sight – seas of blood.

7th “ Sunday. Said mass at 8. Preached 7pm.

8th “ Monday. Chess in convalescent ward.

11th “ Thursday. Witnessed head operation. 12-2am. Terrifying.

13th “ Sat. Very cold and wet. Helped at mass. Walked to Bailleul in afternoon.

15th “ Monday. Wet and cold. Had tooth out. (last filling of this tooth eating army biscuits). Heavy bombardment.

17th Ash Wednesday. Celebrated at 7. Wet all day. Had lousy night.

18th Played football. Helped extricate motor ambulance that had got stuck in mud. Got mixed up myself with the wheels etc. Greatcoat badly torn and nearly had arms pulled off.

21st Sunday. Celebrated 8am. Preached 7pm.

23rd Tuesday. Said mass at 7. Played footer all morning, slept all afternoon. Busy night and little sleep. When on night duty, we were nearly always able to get a few hours sleep after the wounded had been cleared. Then we enjoyed ourselves during the morning and got in more sleep in the afternoon. I would often celebrate after coming off night work and then go to “bed” after breakfast.

24th Wedns. Lay abed most of day. Snow. These were awful days. The barn was cleared of its straw and refuse after a while, and we lay on the cold concrete. For a long while I had only one blanket. It was misery to lie and try to sleep. Vermin within – rats

and mice without – noises – smell of horse dung all round and bitter cold without. The lice were a great plague, one got them from the wounded men who would generally be infected. Once got them and it was impossible to be clean again. There were no proper bathing facilities – we got baths in the convent laundry at night – by being nice to the sister in charge and turning up at the right moment. And we got our clothing washed in the same place for a small sum.

25th Thurs. Had 24 hours off. This took place every week when the two sections changed duties. Usually an ambulance has three sections but the 7th so badly cut up early in the war that for a long time it ran with two only “A” & “C”. Walked to **Balleul Bailleul** with Morgan. Came back in time to take service and preach at 7.

26th. Easy day. Did not feel well. Suffering from diarrhoea and “hitchicoo” – (the popular name for lice). The long days and nights, always in and about the convent among sick and wounded – with little exercise in fresh air – and with improper food, was telling. So many meals consisted of hard biscuits and Tickler’s “Plum & Apple” and hard milkless tea. I think Tickler will go down to posterity as a name of hate. The stuff that bore the name “Tickler’s Plum & Apple” was pretty horrible. Acids must have played a large part in its production, and the action of which on the metal tins did not conduce the mellowness in flavour, and as green vegetables were unknown (I only once tasted any in all my 16 months as a private). We used to try and supply the vegetable element by eating freely of so called Jam.

Sunday 28th Went to mass at 7. Had an easy day. Poor Teague died. He was a private in the Liverpool Scottish. I had met him previously in the dressing station when he was sick with jaundice – and as he was also a Cornishman, we became very friendly. This time he came in with a bullet through his head. I only saw him when he was dying. It was a shock. A fine cheery fresh-faced boy. I saw his grave later in the parish cemetery. The same evening we had a poor lad in with a nose cap of a shell in his left lung. He complained of a pain in his side and Captain Vellacott (a good surgeon and a gentleman) attended to him at once. When he put his hand into the wound and pulled out the nose cap we were all greatly surprised. It had jagged edges and had revolved inside the poor lad and torn his lung to bits. Yet he claimed the thing as his “souvenir”! He died as would be expected, after about 24 hours.

1st March Monday Went over Mill in Mt Rouge. Had a jolly time in the estaminet there, the “In d’Hope” whatever that may mean.

2nd Tuesday. Said mass. Played in league match. We had formed a league among the various sections of the ambulance (“A”, “C”, “ASC”, etc)

5th Friday. Transferred by Staff-Sergeant Ritchie to “serious ward” to help “01 Smith” (so called because there were so many Smiths and 01 are the final figures of his regimental number.) 01 Smith was a rough fellow – but kind to me – and didn’t like to see me doing the dirty work of washing floors etc. But I tried to shew him I was proud to do it. Ritchie got me put in this job because he thought it would be a good thing for a priest to be in the place where most of the deaths took place. Ritchie was a good fellow who did much to make me happy. A professional soldier, but a splendid churchman. He had the happy faculty of understanding that we could be a priest when acting as such – and an ordinary soldier when on duty as such. We had a death that night. After a while the frequent deaths became unnerving. A man would be brought in with an abdominal lung wound. For 24 hours he would be restless – demanding instant attention lest he got

out of bed and took drink. All the time he would beg water, which to give him was death to him, and couldn't understand that you were withholding it for his own good. They would plead for it till you almost wept – or else got sharp and angry with them. One man I remember catching trying to get the water from his hot water bottle. Sometimes we had 4 or 5 such cases and had to stay with them in the same little room for 12 hours eating our food there too! Occasionally we had a corpse lying on the floor while we ate and drank. Yet I was glad of this work I was able to commend many a departing soul to his creator.

01 Smith, for all his roughness, was very kind and gentle to the patients, and at the last would say to me “Go on ‘Gennel’ do what you can for him, he’s finished”. One got so used to the symptoms of approaching death – failing breath – the rattle in the throat. So many men as they died murmured “Mother” – forgotten were friends and wives and sweethearts – they just went back to the days of childhood and they lay in their mother’s arms and looked up into their faces – in short, when they received their first impressions.

6th Sat. Two deaths today in serious ward. Went up to collecting post at night with bearers to Kemmel. I had expected excitement, but it turned out to be a very quiet night. The star shells were very wonderful, and I saw shell holes and wrecked houses for the first time. We loaded up the horse wagons from wrecked farms etc. – fetching the wounded up from cellars and all kinds of odd places.

7th Sunday. Said mass at 8. Slept all morning. This day “Grannie” a 15 inch gun fired for the first time. She was placed in a field by the dressing station – and it was possible to see the shell soar up into the air and disappear Boschward. Preached at 7. Wrote up my diary that night at 4.30am. “In the ward all asleep, 4 cases and Smith”. When things were quiet Smith and I took turns to keep watch, while the other slept.

8th Monday – “Café au lait and cognac” at “In d’Hope” – a thing strictly forbidden!

9th Tuesday. 24 hours off. Went to Bailleul with Timber Woods. Visited the estaminet. Sleepy and head-achy all day. (This was not connected with the entry of previous day!)

11th Another death at 7.15am.

12th Friday. A “stunt” expected. Made great preparations – much bombardment. Shoals of wounded – some very horrible. Two deaths in special ward.

14th Sunday. Said mass at 8. Walked to windmill. In bed rest of day. Cpl. Sanderson died that night in the special ward.

15th Monday. Someone said “If you want to see a sight have a look in the mortuary”. I did. I saw a bunched sack – when I uncovered it, I found it contained the jumbled remains of a soldier who had met a whizz-bang in the road.

16th Tuesday. A poor lad died at 9.30.

19th Friday - snow – said mass. Had pain in ear. Sleeping on floor seemed to cause unusual secretion of wax. Later I had my ear syringed by Capt. Vellacott with surprising results. There was enough wax to make a gramophone record – almost!

20th – Poorly today. Thick head. Weather fine. Two amputation cases. Both died.

21st Sunday. Said mass at 7. Glorious day. Had jolly walk with Harold Crabtree. Preached at 7pm. Had supper in evening with S/sergt Wooten of London Fd Ambulance who was on sanitary work. He afterwards took a commission.

25th Annunciation. Said mass at 7. All this week we were preparing to move.

29th Said mass. Cold but sunny. The weather now steadily growing more beautiful

2nd April Good Friday. Nice service 7.30am by a new chaplain. Lovely weather. Played chess in open with old Bill Rains.

3rd Sat. Bish. of London preached to troops at Lochre.

4th Easter Day. Assisted at 7.30 at celebration and celebrated at 11 & 11.30. I wore just my uniform. There were some turned up to make their communion, but turned back when they saw it wasn't a commissioned chaplain. So much for their churchmanship. How tied we are to outward things.

8th April. Moved to Mnt Noir. This was the beginning of a very happy time. We used a Chateau for an officers rest camp. My duties were to wash floors and carry water etc. It was a beautiful spot. Glorious trees, and the spring came all at once. Many happy hours I spent walking about among the trees. Nature at its best. We slept over the stables – a noisome place – but we didn't mind that. Rat-infested it was too – with big, quiet, greasy ones. There was a huge cat that lived there – and prowled about day & night after the rats.

11th Sunday. Went to the village mass at Westoutre at 10 with R.O. Hall a Baptist student. This was my first of many experiences of French and Belgium village churches. I remember the crowd of dirty people – the frequent shuffling of chairs – the mixture of languages in the service – the spitting on the floor etc. In the evening held a service myself in the open at Mnt. Noir. Capt Vellacott was officer in charge at Mnt Noir – he did much to help me – encouraged all services and gave me every facility for holding them.

14th Wedn. My diary has “Oh! for home”. The weather was so lovely – thoughts of home would come.

16th Friday. “Egg dinner at estaminet a la descente de la grotte”. This little estaminet just opposite the entrance to the chateau soon became a favourite resort of mine. There were few quiet places – most estaminets were always full of troops and very rowdy. This one was always quiet. Madame “Deflue” & M. “Schumaker (he was a cobbler & lame) were very nice quiet people. Harry the little boy was a nice little kiddie – and “Jean”, the little girl who served the beer, was a favourite with everyone. Many a meal I had there – sometimes breakfast (eggs boiled or as an omelette) – at other times when hard up I would only drink beer (French, at 1d a glass). Many a quart of that I have safely put away there. It was particularly warm weather then - & we had restrictions – so I often popped round for a drink. In time they got to know I was a priest and sometimes I borrowed chairs from them for mass. Jean got to know and look for “Philippe” – as she called me.

17th Went to Bailleul. “Heavy firing today – Hill 60 taken”. We were some distance from the line – but near enough to know from the bombardments that things were happening.

18th Sunday. Celebrated at 7 in Sergeants Mess – 8 communicants. Lovely day. Enjoyed myself. Good walk and plenty of tobacco & cigarettes. (Tobacco was always “issued” on Sundays). “Leisure time. Open air service at 6 – Capt. Vellacott preached. Heavy firing”. The sergeant's mess was a ground floor room in the chateau. “Nobbie” Clarke slept there – he was the sergeant's batman. He would prepare the place nicely for church. Ritchie would get flowers. Capt Vellacott let me use the five gilt candelabra from the dining room for the altar. I would get up early and wash. Do a bit of my G.D.O. work in the chateau – then cut off to mass. Corporal Fenn was very nice and

obliging, and my fellow orderly Harrison never minded doing a double share of the work on those occasions.

20th Played football against 28th R.F.A Battery. Won by 2 to 1. Beautiful weather.

22nd. Egg dinner. Fine. “lovely moonlight night”. The weather and the place were really beautiful. Often at night I would walk up and down among the trees saying my prayers.

25th. Sunday. “Said mass at 7. 4 communicants. At 7pm Chaplain of the 9th F.A. took service”. Strange to say even a brother priest could not get away from the outward appearances. This chaplain spoke a few words to me the first time he came. After that he would come and go without saying anything – notwithstanding that I had prepared his church for him and more or less prepared his congregation. Poor man.

26th. Lovely day. Heavy guns in evening.

28th. Perfect day - very hot. Heavy firing in evening.

29th. “Perfect weather. Egg dinner. Beer”.

May 1st Sat. “May day, lovely weather. Early walk with Bert Green”. Many a lovely walk I had there – and especially in the early morning. The spring never seemed so beautiful.

2nd Sunday. “Said mass at 7. Service at 6. Bert Green spoke. Many drunks”. This was probably pay-day. It nearly always ended in drunks. It was by no means pleasant to have them come in after you had gone to bed. The language was not of the sweetest – and they were frequently indiscriminately sick!

3rd. Breakfast at “De la Grotte”.

5th. Close weather – breakfast at De la Grotte.

6th. Very hot – much beer. Heavy storm.

8th. Heavy firing all day. Lovely weather.

9th Sunday. Said mass at 7. 3 Communicants. Heavy firing. Chaplain of 9th came at 7.

10th. Lovely day. Hall “partis”. He had been suffering badly from D.A.H & V.D.H. Today he went away – later to get his discharge.

12th Wedn. My birthday. Had walk before breakfast with “Robbo” (Robinson – a little chap from York) “nice lunch omelette”

13th Ascension Day. Wet. Mass at 7. Jones celebrated.

15th.”Dinner at estaminet – as often”.

16th Sunday. Said mass at 7. 4 communicants. Preached at 7. Nice service. Lovely weather.

17th. Wet today. Whitewashing. My only experience of such in the army. The army is always tidying and improving places. We had to whitewash all the upper rooms in the chateau.

20th. “Very cheerful today. Italy – and English cabinet changes”. Italy’s intervention seemed to mean so much. We were all praying of course for the end. At that time the end of the war seemed my only chance of getting out of the army. I remember being very excited on this day. I felt the end of the war was in sight. Alas! How often after this did I think the same thing. At the Somme – at Arras – when U.S.A. joined in, etc. However – these things helped to make life bearable.

23rd Whit Sunday. Mass at 7. W.P.J. (Jones) celebrated. Two officers communicated. I note this, because it was so rarely that officers accepted our ministrations. Prayers at

Grotto in evening. This being the “Mass de Marie” popular devotions were held at the grottos and shrines. This was very nice. The priest came – someone rang a bell and the people assembled. The nicest thing about it was the singing of the “Santa Maria, or pro nobis” by a choir of girls. Chaplain of 9th took service at 7.

24th Monday – Heavy firing early. Perfect weather. Gas fumes. This was the first gas attack – when so many of our fellows went under – and the Canadians so gallantly saved the situation in front of Ypres. When we got up in the morning we all noticed our eyes were stinging. At the time we couldn’t understand what it was. For some days afterwards we were busy making little respirators for the troops. These were the first anti-gas appliances used in the war.

26th. Rose at 4 – walk with Robbie. This was a particularly jolly one. We walked through St James Capelle where we had some beer – then through the lovely woods of Mnt Noir. We lay on our backs and gazed up into the maze of beautiful beech leaves and were happy. We finished up with breakfast at the estaminet “de la Grotte”.

27th. Orders to move.

30th Trinity Sunday. Said mass at 7. Only S/Sgt Ritchie present. Lovely flowers. Ritchie was a treasure in those days. He could always be depended upon to turn up for mass. Many a weekday mass have I said when he was the only one present.

Moved to Westoutre.

31st. Up at 5.30. Moved to near Poperinghe Bivouaced with Green and Martin (a jolly Derbyshire collier). The name of the place is Hoofzaaf.

June 1st. Fine. Fixing tents. Received jolly collapsible cup from children of St. Peter’s catechism. The thing in itself was of little practical use – but I treasured it as coming from the children. How I used to think of them. Whenever I get letters etc. from St. Peter’s children it made me very homesick.

2nd. Fatigues all day. Hot. Ragging with Bert at night. How we used to rag! I don’t think Bert ever really understood my madness.

4th Friday. Moved to field a little behind Poperinghe – near Boescrehe Boeschepe (commonly called “boo-sheep”). We ran a divisional rest-camp here, and stayed many months. I bivouacked with Bert Green. Usually my work was fatigues – broken by occasional trips to do stretcher-bearing in the line.

5th – “Fatigues – cleaning up cow-dung”.

6th Sunday. Mass at 7 in operating tent. 6.30 pm open air service. Nice new chaplain. This was Canon Macnutt who was very popular and efficient – and a great friend to Jones and me.

8th. “Paid out” today. Had swim in evening in pond.

11th. Jolly walk with Rains. Chess tournament. The friendship of old Bill (afterwards Athos) was a great treasure. Hundreds of hours we spent together in pleasant intercourse. He would tell me stories of his pre-war army experiences abroad – and we would talk of the war – and religion and Socialism – and books (Bill was very fond of Arnold Bennett) and of his little girl Winnie. Long live old Bill – the cheery one.

13th Sunday. Mass at 6.30. W.P.J. celebrated. Open air service at 6.30.

15th. Fine day – putting up marquees for 10th C.C.S – they occupied a field opposite – and from time to time we gave them a hand.

16th Wed. Mass at 6.30. Brilliant charge before Ypres. Batch of wounded came in. German prisoners to tea. This was my first sight of a Bosche. I looked upon them then,

and always afterwards with muffled feelings. I pitied them as conquered foes – but hated and wanted to kill them, when I thought of the gas and other horrors.

17th Thursday. My first “stunt” – a never to be forgotten experience. We left “Pop” in motor ambulances at 2.30am, fetched out of bed and didn’t in the least know where we were going. Arrived at the asylum in Convent at Ypres to relieve the 9th F.A. who were nearly worked to death. Found the place full of German and British wounded. Rows and rows of stretcher cases awaiting treatment. Piles of blood stained bandages – the whole place knocked to bits by shells of every calibre. Smell of blood and carbide – which I shall always associate with dressing stations. We spent the whole day cleaning off the cases and clearing up some of the mess. In the evening we sent out bearers. I was offered the chance of staying at the dressing station as I had been at it hard all day – but in those days I was full of beans and ready for anything, so I also went. Marched through Ypres carrying stretchers – with what awe did we gaze at the venerable wreck of the once glorious old “Halles aux drops draps” and Cathedral – noble even in their destruction. Arrived at the Reformatory near the Menin Gate. Formed into stretcher squads and spent the whole night carrying from the aid posts and dugouts to the Reformatory where the wounded were put into ambulances and taken to the convent. Up and down the Menin Road all night – a distance of about 21/2 miles. Shells and bullets. Flare of Very lights. When I first experienced a whiz-bang near a dug out place I was very confident – instinctively ducked into a trench and laughed when the earth that was thrown up fell on my neck. No shrapnel helmets in those days. But in time I got less appreciative. When we went up and down that long hard road, shells would sometimes whiz across and burst in the hedge with a bang and a flare.

Occasional shrapnels burst overhead – near the line bullets hissed. How weary and thirsty we got. But there was no stopping. In places trees had been blown across the road and the stretchers had to be lifted over them. At one place a house was burning and a lot of spare S.A.A. inside kept popping off with a disconcerting noise. Always hurried past that house – because I thought the glare would draw an extra share of attention from the Bosche. Near the house a pig lay dead – and the story went round that Hardy (a windy, boastful little cuss) tried to load it in a stretcher, thinking it was a “case”. How the man pleaded to be taken away first! Most of the wounded were collected behind the wall of a shattered house – and I remember noticing a forlorn cat prowling about on the remains of the roof – regardless of bullets.

The night had an exciting finish. Corporal Tatford and I were the last party to go up. It was getting light. We thought we had better go up in case there were any more wounded. An M.O. met us and took us to a dug-out where there were still three stretcher cases to bring away. The M.O. wanted to get them all away and finish the job. But that was obviously impossible. So he and another M.O. took us – Tatford and I & another – and off we started. All four of us were needed to get them across trenches – and it was getting awfully and painfully light. After a lifetime we got them to the road – and the M.O.’s went off with their case – leaving us with the other, and the parting advice “you had better hurry down the road; as soon as it is light the Germans will shell the road like “Hell”. We were both dog tired, and our wrists simply couldn’t hold the stretcher for more than a dozen steps or so. All the night we had been carrying four to a stretcher. So

we had to rest down every few steps – despite the bullets. But we got away in the end. We got back to the convent done up thoroughly – and slept anywhere and anyhow.

18th Friday. We went out again bearing. But we had much less to do – there were only a few cases to fetch – and there was much less shelling – but still plenty of bullets flying about. Only did we journey up and down the Menin Road that night.

19th Sat. Returned at 4am in motor ambulances to our own place behind Pop. Very glad we were too. Our little bivouacs seemed like home, sweet home, to us. How luxurious it was to wash and shave again, and sleep!

20th Sunday. Mass 6.30. Evening service 6.30pm. Jones preached.

21st Beautiful day. Walk to **Bascapè Boeschepe** in evening with Rains – a charming little village.

22nd & 23rd. Putting up marquees for 10th C.C.S. Chess with Bill.

24th. Had bath – chess with Harris (a bank manager from Haverfordwest – who was very delicate – and unfitted for this work. Yet he couldn't get any other job in the army. So does the army waste its talent)

27th Sunday. Said mass in operating tent – 9 communicants, Bert Green came. Preached in open air 6.30pm.

30th. D.D.M.S. inspected. Covered up all round. Flurries of officialdom.

1st July. Visited Rains' brother in Notts and Derby's.

3rd Had bath.

4th Sunday. Mass at 6.30. Very hot today. Lived on beer and bread and jam. Evening service 6.30.

6th. “English stunt – oh ye gods!”

7th. Mass 6.30am. High wind. Heavy showers. Walk to Mt. des Cats. (A delightful place on far end of Ridge where is Trappist monastery.

9th. “Subject for book ‘ my life in penal settlement in Flanders’ ! Getting very bored with life just now. We had very light duties – and the S/M had nothing else to do than to make our lives miserable. Silly childish rules and regulations Uninspiring work – no danger.

10th. Had my hair cut. It had been done only a week previous. But the S/M with nothing else to do but “ throw his weight about” had “ ticked me off “ again on parade. Henceforth I resolved I would never have it cut until I was told to do so – if I couldn't be trusted to use my own judgement in the matter, I would just be an automaton.

11th Sunday. - mass 6.30 – service 6.30pm. These services – especially the celebrations – really kept me going.

13th. Chess – great game with Fairbrass. He was the champion practically – and rather swollen headed. Yet somehow on this occasion I licked him and knocked him out of the running. Stunt in the evening at Mde Devacht's. This is the beginning of a great friendship Bill and I formed – often we went to this little cottage – and spent hours there. Lucie became our great friend. Shall always be grateful to them for the way they eased the burden of life for us.

15th. Walked to Mt Noir with Bill. Warm reception at old haunt “de la Grotte”.

16th. Bill and I got passes and went again to same place where we had nice meal of eggs and coffee.

18th. Sunday. Said mass at 6.30 – used vessels etc. from Church Army Coffee Stall. Service 6.30pm. To Mde Devacht's' again in evening – more stunt.

20th. Stunt and fun at Mde Devact's.

22nd. Wet all day and night. Considering the only shelter from the stormy blast was a little bivouac made of waterproof sheets and a mackintosh cape, we did well. Bert was a good schemer.

24th. Off for another turn at bearing. Halted midday in field near Dickelusch Dickebusch. Went in at night to Bedford House - a dressing station about a mile from the line. Slept that night in very feeble dug-outs in the grounds of the chateau. How we were squashed in. My first night in a dug-out. I remember sleeping on a piece of deal planking covered with empty sandbags. But we were a cheery party. Nobbie Clarke and old Joe Carey amused us very much in these days. Nobbie brought with him sacks full of stuff. By profession he was a rag and bone merchant. So he always carried about sacks of odds and ends. If you lacked anything – from a Prayer Book to a few nails – Nobbie could always produce them for you. What funny yarns he pitched us as we lay there with time hanging heavily. How Bert Green and I used to laugh. The dug-outs were low – and of course mud and earth got everywhere. But the weather was fine – and in those days the grounds were not so badly knocked about.

25th Sunday. Went to R.C. mass in ruined chateau. A regiment of the R.I.R were in our division (3rd) in those days and they had a splendid chaplain. The room was all blackened with smoke, and water was dripping from the ceiling – the altar vases were empty 18 pounder cases. I remember Nobbie and Joe in the afternoon as we sat in the dug-out. Nobbie broke off in the middle of a highly “risky” story he was telling, saying “Oh today is Sunday – let's sing a little hymn”. I think he didn't see any inconsistency – but I wouldn't help him. Bert and I laughed very much over it. The batteries all round were busy today – somehow A.D. Stations are always among the batteries – it is inevitable I suppose – but not pleasant. When the Hun was replying to our guns his shells were apt to drop among us in the dressing station. Aeroplane brought down today – one of ours. It was a sickening sight – the Bosche circled round and round like a bird of prey – then dived at him – and let off his machine gun – ours came down like a wounded bird.

26th. Heavy shelling all day. Went out bearing at night. We went to aid posts in support lines. It was a beautiful spot. The trenches were in a pine wood – on the “Bluff” – and everything was so neat and clean. It was a full moon too. The rifle shots sounded so loud. At that time we didn't know much of the danger – and didn't quite know where we were. Later on I saw the Bluff under far worse conditions.

27th. Sandbagging.

28th & 29th. Same thing.

30th. Terrific shelling. We had a couple of 5.9's among us which scored us some. How we dived for our dug-outs! Poor Nobbie was carrying a “Dixie” of water – one of the shells dropped near him and flung the Dixie around his neck.

31st. Another shell near us at breakfast time. We were beginning to feel insecure. Our miserable dug-outs would hardly stop a cricket ball – let alone a “five-nine”. We got into the way of walking about cautiously. Heavy bombardment in the evening. We sat in the dug-out and played bridge.

1st August. Easy day – Party from 9th F.A. came at night to relieve us. Went out once that night.

2nd. Went out before breakfast. Left at night. Had “windy” march back. Foster got wounded in cheek with shrapnel bullet. Stayed night at Dickelusch – slept in barn

3rd. Clearing up. Went to Devadt’s at night and had more stunt.

6th. Bill went on short leave to England. Had new tunic today.

8th Sunday. Mass at 6.30am. Fine sermon from Canon McNutt in the evening.

12th. Bill came back.

14th. Fun at the Devadt’s.

17th. Revisit to Mt Noir with Bill Rains.

21st. Straafe against army with W.P.J. Jones and I were very fed up. Today we had it all out. The net result of it was that we decided to try for chaplaincies again. They didn’t come off for a very long time, but this was the earliest beginning.

22nd. W.P.J. and I paraded in connection with the above.

23rd. Witness at Fraser’s court-marshal. An example of a sergeant major who thought his job was to make men’s life miserable. Fraser got some days No 1 and turned into a discontented military criminal all because of a fat, ugly, self-important blighter who wasn’t half as fine a man as himself.

24th. Victory of Riga – great jubilation. To A.D.S at **Buderdom**. **Think he means Ouderdom** Sat up at night watching poor lad die (Foley of the 4th Middx). How horrid were the flies.

25th. Foley died – took his funeral in evening.

26th. Returned to Pop again. Glorious day.

27th. Went with wagons to **Abeale** **Abele** to fetch cement. We took most of the time stopping at estaminets where the fellows called for beer.

29th. Mass 6.30. Laying concrete for loose standing in morning. Service at 6.30pm.

31st. Went to Poperinghe to fetch shale for making paths.

1st September. Talk with Canon McNutt in evening. Jones and I gave him our views in the Army.

3rd. Rain all day. Went to **Vlamatingle** **Vlamertinghe** in afternoon to fetch bricks from ruins. Place all knocked to bits.

4th. Played cards in evening at Devacht’s.

10th Friday. Bombardment today. Jones and I sent in our applications. Cards that night at Devacht’s.

11th Sat. Took service of preparation for H.C. Long talk afterwards on religion with Rains.

16th Got job as runner to men isolated on account of Cerebro Spinal meningitis case. I had a nice ‘cushy’ time. The men were Bermudan volunteers and very jolly fellows.

18th. Took preparation service in Q.M.S. “briny”.

21st. Route march. I always liked these.

22nd. Had “issue” of gift chocolate from Trinidad. Bible class in evening in Bath House.

24th. Bearers went out. Heavy bombardment at night in distance. This was the Loos affair. We are very excited about it – thought end of war was in sight. I didn’t go out – I fondly imagined I might hear something important from the C.G.

25th. Bombardment again – German wounded and two of our drivers killed in Ypres.

26th. Mass 6.30am. Evensong 6.30pm. Funeral of the two drivers in C.B.S. cemetery. The car was riddled with pieces of shell.

28th. Assistant in scabies lines. Busy time giving them sulphur baths. Great fun – to me – not to the patients.

2nd October. Saturday. Took Prep service again.

4th. Good “goff” in camp. Goff = concert. We had one every week. I often sang songs I remembered from “Scottish Students son book”

6th. Said mass of Holy Angels. Canon McNutt on leave. Jones and I hoped much from this.

7th. Rains and I visited private in French Hospital who in peace times was Professor in Paris. He was a Socialist and Pacificist – so he couldn’t have been very happy. His job was that of telephone operator.

8th. Fire in neighbouring billet. Nice bit of fun – huge houses burnt down.

10th. Jones celebrated.

11th. Good goff.

13th. Said mass. Took Bible class in evening.

15th. Hicks baptised in operating tent. Canon M. made nice service of it.

16th. Joe Carey again in clink. Was so drunk on parade that he couldn’t stand up.

17th. One year in the army. Mass 6.30, service 6.30pm.

19th. Canon McNutt left us. He was suffering with rheumatism so was sent to a softer job. Cards.

20th. Said mass of St. Luke. Went to Poperinghe – had tea with Lubbock an old Aldershot friend.

22nd. Left – marched to EECKE in France – a jolly little village. Nice billet in little farm where was nice lady and little boy Robert.

23rd Sat. Fine – played football; scored two goals.

24th Sunday. Said mass at 7 in “petit boulangerie”. Went to village mass at 10 at neighbouring village of Caistre Caestre. Most of the little farmhouses had little bakehouses in the garden. Madame let us use hers for church. It was very small and draughty and smoked black. But we had some nice services there. Madame lent us generally a table – sometimes a marble-topped wash stand – and a crucifix and candlesticks. Later the same place became the section bath-house.

The church at Caistre Caestre was very nice. The service was a mixture of Latin, French, and Flemish. Many collections were taken during mass. One of them taken by a gentleman in black who would preface the collection by the request “Pour les pauvres” and after anyone had put something in his plate would reply “Merci”.

25th. Bridge. We played this a great deal at Eeecke Eecke. We were at rest and little to do, so bridge played a big part in our time.

29th. Dung-shifting fatigue. This was a typical army fatigue. The farm people didn’t want it removing – but the C.O. did. So we made more smell and mess shifting it than if we had let it remain. On this occasion Bensen (new dead) got very angry with me because I threw a shovelful over his head.

30th Sat. Took preparation service at 6.

31st Sunday. Mass at 7. W.P.J. celebrated. Went to village mass at Caistre Caestre at 10. Sergt. Conway generally paraded and took us.

Monday 1st November. Played cards at estaminet “aux tras verges”. This jolly quiet little place became our daily haunt later. The old lady and gentleman were so nice. It was about the jolliest place we ever had. Here Jack & Bill & I would go most evenings to read and write and play bridge or chess – washed down by small beer or “vin ordinaire”. One of our great drinks (cheap but palatable) was “vin rouge avec grenadine” or “vin blanc avec citron”. They had a sweet little griffon dog and a funny fat old dog. “Fountain” and “Patrique”. Opposite the café is a delightful little chapel of the ‘Our Lady of Grace’ with a wonderful old legend attached.

3rd. Said mass at 7. To **Caistre** again in evening.

6th. Sat. Took preparation service at 6.30.

7th Sunday. Said mass at 7. Went to village mass at 10 at Eecke. Great procession. There were some nice things about the church. E.G. The servers all wore red tippets over their cottas. The priest was a venerable old man with white hair. But like most of the French churches the charm was spoiled by the awful taste as reflected in terrible artificial flowers on the altars and appalling grotesque statues smeared with blood and stuck with daggers.

Had long walk with old Jim Rogers in evening. In peace time his profession was P.M. attendant in a large M.A.B. establishment for the feeble minded. We talked anatomy all the while.

8th. Letter from Vicar. There are not many of these recorded in the diary. This one was a reply to mine in which I proposed taking a combatant commission.

9th. A.P.M. scrutiny parade. Someone in the neighbourhood had committed a large theft in a French shop – to find the thief the lady came round with the A.P.M. and scrutinised all the troops in the district.

10th Wedn. Said mass at 7. Bible class 6.30. We did the Epistle to the Hebrews in this period.

11th. “Saluting drill – pshaw! Grand slam at ‘aux tras verges’ in evening”.

13th Sat. Preparation service in evening. Wet.

14th Sunday. Jones celebrated at 7. Slept in afternoon. This was a favourite way of passing time and forgetting a cheerless existence.

17th Wedn. Said mass at 7. New chaplain came – Revd. M.P. Lennard. He was a good sort- very young. We became great friends. He treated Jones and me as priests – not soldiers. Bible class at 6.

18th. Cold and wet and miserable. Jones and I went to tea with new chaplain.

20th. Moved to **Wrinezeele** No idea but know it is not right!. Awful squash in billet.

21st Sunday. Said mass in sergeants billet. Went to parish mass 10.30. Made an evening rendezvous at estaminet “aux six demins”

22nd. Anniversary of wedding. Remember a parcel from Evelyn coming – containing pork pie, cake, wrist watch etc.

23rd Tues. Moved to Reninghelst. Awful march. Good billet over school.

24th. Given job as assistant clerk.

26th. Snow – sun – mud.

27th. Sat. Prep service 7.15. We held our services here generally in cellar – so low in roof that we couldn’t stand upright.

28th Sunday. Mass in cellar at 7. Jones celebrated. Went to see Lucie with Bill Had lovely time.

29th. Wet – kept in all day. Seedy. Cards at night.

30th. Awful mud. The mud on the Flemish roads has to be seen to be believed. All the houses in the road are plastered with it – to pass a lorry meant to have a mud bath.

2nd December. Said mass at 7. Confirmation candidates present. Went to confirmation in afternoon at Y.M.C.A. hut. Presented to the Bishop of Khartoum & the C.G. The latter broached again subject of chaplaincies to Jones and me although he had previously said in letters it couldn't be done.

3rd. Began using little cottage as rendezvous for which a few of us paid a little amount weekly. We called it the "TOTTOS".

5th Sunday. Mass 7.15 in tent. Jones celebrated. To Bradanhock Think he means Brandhoek which is close to Vlamertinghe (Devacht's) in evening with Bill.

7th. On night duty. Cushy. We enjoyed these night jobs. We always cooked a decent supper about midnight – sergeant Conway supplied porridge and the cooks steak. In the morning before breakfast I usually went to the P. church & said my prayers or heard mass – or went C of E mass at Y.M.C.A.

8th Wedn. Mass at 7.15. The six newly confirmed made their communion. Went to Bradanhock in afternoon.

9th. Heard mass in P. church at 7. Had tea at the TOTTOS.

11th. Went to the pictures – these good. Run by Divisional cinema.

12th Sunday. Said mass in cellar at 7.15. Took a funeral in morning of a man who died with us. His platoon officer came – he gave me a contribution for St. Peter's. Service 6.15pm.

13th. Mass in Y.M.C.A. – while here the neighbouring chaplains, assisted by Jones and me, ran as far as possible a daily celebration. It was a great help.

15th. Mass at Y.M.C.A. Jones celebrated. Went to Bradanhock in afternoon. Some tea!

16th. In bed nearly all day.

17th. Said mass at 7.15. Went to pictures.

18th. Mass at 7.15. Notice of leave. Great excitement.

19th Sunday. Mass during bombardment. Jones celebrated. The place was rocking with guns.. Standing by. Gas attack took place today.

20th Monday. Said Mass Y.M.C.A.

21st. Mass. Wet. Leave. Went to Poperinghe at night in ambulance car. Left there 5am. Awful journey to Boulogne. Spent night in ship. Sailed 10.30am

23rd. arrived Victoria – hungry, dirty and shy at 4pm. Rushed to Camberwell and saw Grace & others. Left King's Cross 5.45.

24th to 30th at Sibsey. Went to East Ham with Evie on 30th – stayed night at No 23.

31st. 10am. Left Victoria for France. Words can't describe the dejection and heart ache. Evie and Geoffrey came to see me off.

January 1st 1916. Arrived Reninghelst 3am

2nd Sunday. Said mass 7.15. 12 communicants. Preached 6.30. Lennard generally came to preach in evening – when he couldn't Jones or I did it. While on his leave Jones called at W.O. and got his commission. I came back from leave to learn this. Naturally felt a little left out of things. But hoped for the best.

3rd. Went before C.O. in connection with A.C.D. Went to Emma's in evening (i.e. TOTTOS)

4th. Went to see Lucie with Bert. On nights again.

5th. In bed all day. Bible class at six.

6th. Said mass in cellar. It was very nice. To TOTTOS in afternoon.

7th. Slept in tent – the night duty men did this – because otherwise in billet wouldn't have got much sleep.

8th. “Nothing doing – sleep” (i.e. P.P.W.G. “fed up”).

9th Sunday. Said mass 7.15. Preached 6.30.

11th. “Nothing doing” (P.P.W.G. F.U.).

12th. Said mass at 7. Bible class at 6. Steak supper at midnight.

15th. Jones came to see us in his new uniform. Felt like Joseph.

16th Sunday. Said mass 7.30 in recreation hut. Had brought back a little pocket set of vessels from England when on leave. This made things much better.

19th. Said mass at 7 in cellar.

21st. “Nothing doing”. (P.P.W.G. F.U.)

23rd Sunday. Said mass in recreation hut. 10 communicants. Service there in evening.

24th. Went to Lucie's in evening.

26th. Said mass at Y.M.C.A.

27th. Helped at Post Mortem. A man had died of rum - & the P.M. was decided on to see if anything else was the matter. It was a ghastly business – but very interesting and instructive.

29th. Letter from C.G. He wanted an interview. It was such a practical idea! Such a head of affairs in another department would have been cleared out long ago. The church will stick anything.

30th Sunday. Said mass in recreation hut -12 communicants. Cold and foggy today.

31st. Cold – not feeling well.

Wedn. 2nd Feb. Brick fatigues – cold. Bible class.

3rd. Great aeroplane activity

5th. Said mass in Y.M.C.A.

6th Sunday. Reveille 4.30am. Moved. Long non-stop march. Stayed night at Waemans-Capelle. Very tired.

7th. From Waemans-Capelle to Eparlecques near St. Omar. Billeted in a chateau – very comfortable.

8th Tues. Beautiful spring-like day. Had good clean-up. Bill and I began again on evening meetings – made rendezvous at Café de la Mairie, where we soon became great friends with Leon Ruscelle – a nice lad of about 13 years. Our great drink here was Dubonnet. Leon knew no English – so Jack and I would sharpen our French on him. I heard an interesting dialogue here between a brawny Scot and Madame. Jock, “Will ye gee us soom Malaggar”. Madame “Dubonnet?” Jock, “Malaggar please”. A friend slipped in and translated, “Monsieur, il demanded u vin Malaggar”. Madame, “Ah bien monsieur! – oui, tout de suite”.

9th. Said mass in chateau, 5 communicants. Beautiful day. Played football.

10th. Fine day; drills in morning. Had glorious ramble in afternoon in course of which we met G.O.C. (Sir Douglas Haig) and staff on his rounds. It was a glorious place for

rambles – beautiful woods and forests. Reproved today by S/M for bad behaviour in the march.

13th. Said mass 7.15. 5 communicants. We got to use a cellar for our chapel – and had some jolly times there. Went to village mass at 10.30. Leon was one of the servers.

Wine in evening at Café de la Mairie.

14th. Wrote again to C.G. & Bishop. This was result of a night when I couldn't sleep and was full of ideas – so I sat up and wrote. Wet today. Played cards.

15th. “Route march – kit inspection – bridge – wine”

16th Wedn. Said mass of All Saints. 2 communicants. Ready for a sudden move. Most of the time we were at Eparlecques we were expecting to move suddenly.

17th. Fine day. In morning we washed wagons. Played in sixes match in afternoon.

Service of instruction in evening. Spoke on “Prayer”. 13 present.

18th. “Physical jerks”. These were not very pleasant – standing in cold wind, doing breathing exercises etc.

19th. Route march in full marching order. Tug of war in which I tore my hand on another man's belt buckle. A la Mairie de soir.

20th Sunday. Said mass at 6.45 and 7.15. Said earlier one for benefit of Benson who had to go on early fatigue. 10 communicants. Went to village mass 10.30. Preached at 6.15.

23rd. Snow – Said mass 7.15. Tug of war.

24th. Cold and fine – had letter from Bishop. Service of instruction in evening, subject Baptism. 12 present.

25th. Sat in little cottage where we used to get our washing done. Learned the expression “Quelle enchante “ there.

26th. Shovelling snow.

27th. Sunday. Said mass – 7 communicants. Preached at 6. Went before C.O. today re letter he had got from C.G. in reply to mine. Still no go.

29th. Route march in new infantry equipment.

March 1st. Said mass in cellar 5.30am. 8 comunicants. Marched off heavily laden at 7. Entrained at S. Oauer. St Omer Detrained at Poperinghe. Awful march to camp near Oubedom Ouderdom. The only occasion when I ‘fell out’ in the march. My boots didn't fit and I had some terrible blisters. Slept in tents that night.

2nd. Fine day. Played cards and doctored my feet. Bombardment and charge – the taking of the “Bluff”.

3rd. To Bedford House – at 2am Had fearful day. Stretcher bearing all day under heavy fire. We had to pass through a barrage each time we went to the aid post. That was surrounded by dead & dying men and almost blown in by shells. The approach to it was full of mud – of the porous sticky kind – if you sank in, you needed to be pulled out. We would approach the barrage again – rest – then dash through as quickly as possible.

Awful sights in the trenches – dead and dying everywhere. Had to walk over the dead to get the living – and such dead – headless men and legless men too. And the mud – often we had to walk through it up to our thighs – and it was bitterly cold too. We kept on at it all day and night – snatching a little food when we could. No place to rest in – save the ruins of the stable – among wounded English and Bosche. We let our clothes dry on us. But we only had about two wounded.

4th Saturday. “Returned to Ouderdom at 12 – utterly worn out. Long night’s sleep assisted & cheered by rum issue.

5th. Spent day resting and drying.

6th Monday. Went to Bedford House again that night. Did turn bearing.

7th Shrove Tuesday. Strenuous day. Stretcher bearing in snow. It filled the shell holes & pits and covered up the obstacles. This didn’t improve the task of carrying wounded men on stretchers on our shoulders. Went up at night to Spail Bank – a position in the canal bank. (Ypres Comines canal).

8th. Ash Wedn. Went out at 3am.

9th 10th 11th. Carried on as usual. Sleeping in dug-out behind stable wall – going out occasionally to aid posts (of which we had 4 or 5). Occasional shells – bullets when we went out. Spent ones used to drop around the dressing station.

12th Sunday. Said mass in dressing room dug-out. 13 communicants. Held short service at 4.30 in bearers’ dug-out. Great crowd turned up. Men always came better the nearer they were to danger.

13th. Beautiful day. Went out at 4.30am.

14th. Bosche shelling batteries near us. Not pleasant.

15th. To Fd. AWC H.Q. at Peninghelst Reninghelst for a clean up.

16th. “Bath, hair-cut, and beer”

17th. Returned to Bedford House.

18th. Sandbagging. A day of mental strain. Bosche shelling very near – and very effectively. He would choose a different battery each day – and five-nine it for hours on end. Went to Bluff that night. Very quiet & fine night. In these days we got assistance by using the trolley lines. Could put one to four stretcher cases in each. Unfortunately the lines were smashed & broken by shells etc. so that from time to time the trolley would run off the lines. Replacing it in the pitch dark wasn’t easy – in the day time to use the trolleys was “asking for trouble”.

19th Sunday. Said mass 8.30 in QM stores – 9 communicants. Nice service 4.30 in dug-out. In these days we would assemble most evenings in Ritchies stores for a few minutes prayer. It was a rough place at night time. You never knew what might descend on you from the sky.

20th. A morning of frightfulness – went up at night to fetch away the Brigadier. The day or so previous they had been shelled out of the farm behind the chateau. We stood and watched it – Ritchie gave us some rum when we got back that night. Poor little Butters got squiffy.

22nd. Horrible bomb accident just after breakfast. Two killed, several wounded. Buried one at 5pm (Pte Graves 4 E.Yks)

23rd. Sandbagging – strafing at night.

24th. Horrid snow again – took two funerals (Sapper Campbell R.E. & Pte W. Newton of 8 KORL)

25th. Lady-day. Went out to Spail Spoil Bank at midnight.

26th Sunday. Said mass of Our Lady – 8 communicants. Took service 4.30.

27th. Battle of St. Eloi. Great crater blown up. Strenuous time. We went out early in the morning – time to arrive at the aid post at Spail Spoil Bank when the strafe began. But we were late and the mine went up while we were going along the duck boards. It was a quiet still morning – towards dawn. Suddenly the whole earth shook and a huge

mass of earth, Bosches etc. went skyward. Every gun in the neighbourhood opened out – and the place became a hell. We had to wait behind a bank until things became quieter – as our way up was being shelled back. We were bearing all day and night. A gun from Hill 60 got the dug-outs in **Spil Spoil** Bank in line, and blew up each one in turn. Our duck boards were blown to blazes – our trolley lines bent like string.

28th to 1st. Out each day and night to **Spil** Bank.

Sunday 2nd April. Said mass – 6 communicants. Service at 4.30pm. Had awful nights bearing. Bosche shelling road by White Chateau up the road, very heavily. Continuous clap clap of shrapnel. Ritchie left it to me to go when I thought fit. We waited all night and went out just at dawn. It had quietened down then. A relief had been in process during the night – but the unfortunate relievers could not get near. All the fields were strawn with baggage and equipment. The little cemetery had been knocked about.

3rd Monday. Quiet day. We left at night for **Reminghelst**. **Reminghelst**

5th. Lovely weather. Went out with Bill again. It was like a reunion – as I had been away from him over a month.

6th. On police duty that night. Saw old Bill off to England in evening.

7th. Left **Reminghelst** – arrived at Caestre again. Went to café “aux tris verges” that night.

9th Sunday. Said mass in barn – 9 communicants. We made our chapel here, a barn half full of straw. It was a nice farm – and we could get coffee and beer in the farm kitchen – also eggs. Went to mass at **Caistre** **Caistre** at 10. To “trois verfs” in evening.

10th. Beautiful day – football match. **Caistre** in evening.

11th. In evening to **Caistre** – went into little chapel. At this time we went to **Caistre** to the “trois verges” practically every evening from 6 to 8pm.

12th Wed. Said mass – 3 communicants. Played bridge nearly all day.

15th. Was inoculated – a “cocktail” injection. On guard that night, so no **Caistre**. Felt rotten. Did a faint later.

16th Palm Sunday. Said mass – 7 communicants. Fine service in barn in evening. We held a little service every evening this week.

17th. Wet. Bill came back. Jack & Bill & I had nice evening together at **Caistre**.

20th. Celebrated – 4 communicants. Football match. Evening service. **Caistre**.

21st Good Friday. Held Ante-Communion service 9.30. Padre Leonard came in evening. Fine weather.

22nd. Awful rain all day. Prep. for H.C. at 6. Had meal of eggs in evening at “trois vierges”.

23rd Easter Day. A very happy day. We had fitted up the barn nicely for church – with an altar of packing cases and a union-jack for frontal & red cross for reredos. I celebrated at 6 & 7 and 17 made their communion from the ambulance – including two of the officers. At 9.30 Leonard tried the experiment of a Sung Mass. 13 communicated then. Evening service at 5pm.

24th.. Went to medal presentation function at Fletre – when the first chaplain V.C. of the war received his ribbon for work in the St. **Elui** **Elooi** stun. Played chess in evening at **Caistre** with Harris.

26th. Celebrated 6.30am – 9 communicants. Moved to Locre – advance party. Egg & chips at Boescapre Boeschepe on the way. Ritchie & Penfold were very friendly in those days to me.

27th. To Lindenhoek trenches . We had a dressing station at Lindenhoek and a bearers post in “Regent Street” dug outs about 70 yards direct from front line. We stayed two or three days each at the bearers post. Mostly it was nice there. A very quiet part of the line – hardly any shells. At the end of the communication trench there were forms in use and even an estaminet – where we used to go for beer. The aid posts were here and we carried the wounded down to the A.D.S. and returned to the bearers dug outs. We Had two nice doughnuts. Flechey acted as our cook The weather was hot. Stray cats lived round about – but would never come near.

28th. Lots of aeroplane work. Beautiful day. Quiet. Took three walking cases down. By this time shrapnel helmets had been issued which we always wore. It was a pretty communications trench – with nice clean duck boards and overhanging trees. We had lots of beer today.

29th. Sat. Cook wounded today. We were sitting inside the dug out talking – discussing who should go to fetch the beer from the estaminet. A 5.9 dropped a long way off over the ridge – so far away that we took no notice. Then all at once Cook received a sharp blow in the face and rolled over with the graceful expression “The dirty bastards, they’ve got me”. It was a nasty wound and we feared he would lose one of his eyes. We took him away on a stretcher and we felt rather sad after he had gone.

That night we had a gas attack. Had been expecting it for some time – in the evening a couple of prisoners came in and told us one was to come off. It did – and we sat for three hours in our P.H. helmets – with a guttering candle – the dug-out rocking with the explosion of the whiz-bangs that were coming over like rain and dropping in the communications trench. The pretty trench had lost much of its prettiness by the morning. We did not get any gas – my chief desire all through was to smoke. About dawn we took off our helmets and started in bringing down the cases.

30th Sunday. It was hard work – many were very bad and a good many died – a horrible sight to see. Even the slightly gassed had to be carried out – any exertion being very bad for the gassed Later in the morning reinforcements arrived from Locre. In the evening I returned to the D.S. at Lindenhoek – and was glad to get that distance away. Went up again that night - how alarming after that day was the sound of a horn! For some time my favourite dream was gas. Ball – one of the bearers, nearly died of fright through a false alarm. Got his helmet on and fell into a hole whilst all passers-by trod on him.

Wed. 3rd. Very quiet – no shelling. Returned to Locre.

4th. Given job of billet orderly. This was a nice soft job.

5th. Said mass of SS. Philip & James in recreation hut.

6th. Windy today. Walk to Mt. Rouge with Bill & Jack. A.S.C. section had great rag in the billet that night – they were really funny with their catcalls.

7th Sunday. Leonard celebrated at 6.45. Went to see Lucie with Bill in afternoon.

8th. Wet & cold – to Mt. Rouge with Bill in evening..

9th. Wet. Wine in canteen in convent with Bill & Jack. This was rather sad as Bill was going away to Base Hospital.

10th. “Guillaume s’en allait”

11th. Thurs. Celebrated in Rec. hut. Fine weather. Sat up all night with poor fellow whom the war had turned “Batchy”

12th. Fine. Several letters today, being my birthday. Went to Mt. Rouge in evening with Harris and Jack. Played with children there.

14th. Served at mass in morning.

15th. Saw Belgian kill a pig and drink the blood – disgusting sight. Even the troops were disgusted – scorching the hide. Saw Bates today. Had letter from W.O. that brought great hopes.

16th. Fine again. Walked to Mt. Noir with Jack and Harris saw Jean at “la descente de la Grotte”. Camp bombed by Hun plane that night. We awoke to hear fearful reports and sound of breaking glass - & thought the place was being shelled at last. We had often wondered why it had not been – and recently the shells had been getting nearer. I had visions of the poor children in the convent under such circumstances. But the noise soon went away – the only bomb that dropped actually in our lines, hit the only empty tent – and no one was touched.

17th. Celebrated – 4 communicants.

18th. On police duty – to Mt. Rouge in evening with Jack. Jack hoping at this time to get away too. A skilled engine builder and the army was asking for such, yet he is still a stretcher bearer.

19th. Feeling very fed up with waiting for further developments from letter. Was it all going to end as before?

20th. To Mt. Rouge with Jack & Harris. Fine weather.

21st. Fine – served Leonard at Mass. Great hopes given today.

22nd To Mt. Rouge again. Great discussions with Jack and Harris. They didn’t follow my philosophical theory of optimistic pessimism!

23rd Tues. Awoke at 3 – beautiful morning. Said mass 5 communicants. Farewell mass. To Mt. Rouge again in afternoon with Jack. The new C.O. was very kind to me – he pushed my case, so that today authority came for me to go to see the C.G. at W.O. Left late that night – walked to Bailleul – it was a happy walk. I “didn’t care if it rained” – though it was a beautiful night. Slept in station and next morning early (29th May, Wedn.) left for Blighty. Arrived in town 12 midnight – stayed night at East Ham. Saw C.G. next morning at W.O. Had discussion on confession – went to S. George’s Coffee House for lunch – arrived Sibsey 6.30pm.

There followed rapidly appointment to Chaplaincy - & discharge from the army – and I had a very very happy three weeks. This is the end of the career of 43123 Pte. Gendall P.P.W. R.A.M.C.

R.I.P. 7th Fld Amb. Jock Fairbains, Bill Howard, Sergeant Penfold, Harry Hewitt, Stanley Benson, Will Fairbrass, Fred Hack.

13th June 1916. Left Victoria at 7.50am. Travelled to Folkestone in same compartment with Melhuish, the V.C. chaplain. At Folkestone was hung up because for some reason, I had not got my movement authority. So I spent the day (somewhat bored) wandering around F. – sat on the front – went to pictures. My movement paper turned up alright

later, and I crossed to Boulogne in the evening. Chummed up with a R.C. padre and put up with him at the hotel Louvre.

14th Tuesday. Left Boulogne 2pm and got to St. Ouer St Omer where I was to report to D.C.G. in evening. He wasn't there – and I was billeted at Hotel “Fierille d’or” – where were several R.F.C. officers – and a rather silly ,good looking girl. Visited old Bill at 10th Stationary Hospital. Slept well.

15th. Made visit on Shank’s mare to Eperleques – called at Café de la Mairie – saw Leon & family. They were very bucked. Leon took me round to where the 7th F.A. were billeted at Houlle. Saw all the boys – had tea in Sergeants’ mess. They lent me a cycle to get back to St. Ouer. Saw Bill again that evening.

16th. Heard mass at the Cathedral – saw D.C.G. & was detailed to 33rd Division. Went round the fine old Cathedral with two other chaplains – had tea with O’Rorke a “Major padre” – an old friend of Fr. Homer – and formerly a chaplain to 33rd Division. He gave us each a copy of the C. Family newspaper – although I had deliberately lost the one he gave me the day before.

17th Sat. Left St Ouer – and arrived at Bethune where I reported at D.H.Q. and was directed to senior C.F. Ellison – a charming and delightful man. Messed with Heaslett the R.A. chaplain and his pal Newell in delightful house near Banque de France.

18th Sunday. Said mass in Church Institute at 8 – preached and celebrated at Vendin (Divisional school) at 10.30. In the afternoon went out with Heaslett to Cuinchy – a battered little village – on the Basse canal. Visited artillery O.P. & enjoyed myself generally. A few “pip-squeaks”, new name for “whiz-bang”, as we came away.

19th. Called at 98 Bde H.Q. –had lunch there with Major Watson & Capt. Clarke. In the afternoon visited 101st F.A. Annerezine – several theological students in the ranks there – including Groves (ex C.R.) and one or two C.R. aspirants.

20th. S. Mass – 2 communicants. We had daily celebration in the nice little chapel at the church inst. – also daily compline. Visited A.D.S. at home farm – and Wendy Corner at Givenchy. In afternoon went to Essans C.E.M.S. meeting in evening.

21st. Wedn. Divisional house show – spent morning at it. To 101 F.A. in evening.

22nd. Visited 4th Suffolks & 1st Middx – my battalions – to Gorre in evening for funerals.

23rd Friday. Said mass of Corpus Christi at Annerezin (3cc). Colonel Hughes (D.A.D.M.S.) gave us chaplains lecture in First Aid. Visited Mx & Suffolks. One battalion was in barracks at Bethune (Mx) & Suffolks at Gorre.

24th. Visited 18th M.G.C. at Bouvry.

25th Sunday – Went to Suffs. in morning. No one came to mass at 8. Was very disappointed – my predecessor (Stone) said they wouldn’t come - & he seemed right. But things altered considerably later. Took church Parades by companies all morning. Had breakfast at Suffs. H.Q., came back to Bethune to lunch – rested in afternoon. Preached to 99 F.A. at 5.30 in Hospital Givile – and to 101 F.A. at 6.30 at Annerezin – did all this morning about on cycle.

26th Mon. Celebrated 8.30 for 101 F.A. (3cc) L/C Evans came – a Cowley lay-brother. He did fine work later as a stretcher bearer – and finally took a commission in the R.F.A. At five o’clock in C. inst. gave bandaging instruction to the other chaplains. At this time we were all expecting a big push. Confirmation class later.

28th. Visited line farm. Funerals at Gorre cemetery at night.

29th. S. Peter's Day – went to mass in C.T. 8.30 – followed by usual chaplains' meeting. At these meetings we went through any necessary business – mostly took all morning – we smoked and chaffed as much as possible – poor old Ellison had a hard job to keep us steady.

30th. Said mass for 101F.A. (2cc)

1st July 1916. Said mass at C.T. (3)

2nd Sunday. said mass at C.T. at 8. (13), and also at Gorre for Suffs at 12, (8). Took parade services in theatre at 9.30 & 10.30. The latter was my first service with 1 Mx. They came with drums & fifes. At 5.30 preached to 19 F.A. in their place near the prison. Met Cross old G.R. friend in street. He was adjutant to a battalion – though a deacon.

3rd. Said mass 101 F.A. (4). ((Burchall adj. 1 middx)

4th. Visited Suffs in trenches – in “village line” at Auchy. My first visit to the trenches as chaplain. It was very quiet – had tea there with C company

5th. Said mass at C.T. (4). Visited A.D.S. at Loue Farm. Was living at this time with Heaslett & Charlie Newell in Arethune. It was a ripping billet – lovely bedrooms – electric light- dining room etc. We had a jolly time.

6th. Said mass at C.T. (2). Confirmation at Bruay in Evangelistic church. I took three candidates – Johnson of 101 F.A., Ward & Ailsly of 1 Mx. The latter had come down from the trenches and were all muddy. We got lift there in ambulances lent by A.D.M.S. & lift part of way back.

7th Friday. – said mass at C.T. (2) Moved today. Had not joined any unit definitely - so moved with D.A.C. – went to place near Lillers my batman was Hall of 4th Suffs.

8th Sat. Left D.A.C. at midnight with Hall on foot – and joined Suffolks at Railway Station at Choques. All day in the train – detrained near Amiens – had hot march to little village of Rainville. Joined Hudson Richards (T.O.) and Dubois (interrupter) in mess.

10th. Went to see 1 Mdx in neighbouring village of Boisey? Held service in open in evening for Suffolks – quite a lot came. Got to know Spinks today – a S. Bartholomews Ipswich server.

11th. On the move again. Marched to Yaux-sur-Somme near Corbie. Took over camp at Welcome Wood. Had fine service in Somme in afternoon.

12th. Wedn. Said mass twice in the open for the Suffs & Kings. About 50 made their communion. Moved up nearer the line today. Rested at Ville-sur-Corbie. The Somme push was now in full swing – and we were going up to take part in it. Everyone was strung up tight - & expecting great things. We lay that night – the troops in the open – officers in tents.

13th. Auction bridge. Moved to Meaultte. Spent horrid night there. Hudson, Richards and I slept in loft of a deserted cottage – a big 15 inch in the village was shaking the place all night - & guns such as I had never heard before (and probably no one ever had – for this was the biggest bombardment at that time history had known) were roaring all night.

14th Friday – moved to Becordel. Slept in open by roadside. We had various occasional shells that night – but managed to sleep all night.

15th. Great fight today. 98th Brigade attacked at Bezlutin le petit. The depot had pitched near Fucant wood – just beyond the village. I went up to the Quarry Dressing Station – morning with Col. Arthur & a party of the 101st F.A.. Just behind Bezlutinle petit wood - & opposite Mametz wood in “Happy” Valley. Had strenuous time – crowds

of wounded – and shelling all round. Many Suffs. & Middx went under today. I buried a party of mixed English & Bosche by the Quarry in the evening with the assistance of L/C Evans & some others of the R.A.M.C. Returned to Fucant to sleep at night. We had a tent.

16th Sunday. Went into Fucant wood – awful sights there. Dead that had been lying since the push began – in horrible state (it was hot weather) Bosche head – and material lying about. Lay awake nearly whole night – behind us were rows & rows of heavies & 6 inch rounds – which kept up an incessant roaring all night. Didn't undress.

17th Monday. Buried gunner nearby – and got shelled while doing so. Shelling developed all round us today. I built a kind of dug out in the field in evening and slept there at night amid flies and field mice. Visited 1 Mx. in field by Mametz Wood today. They were among batteries and were being cruelly shelled. They only had little holes in the ground to get into. Every few minutes someone was hit. I collected their letters and postcards.

18th. We had to shift back to field near Becadal again. Had tea with Ellison at D.H.Q. at Meaulte. Slept well that night.

19th. Said mass in Y.M.C.A. at Meaulte. Col. Hughes was congregation. Visited 101 F.A..

20th. Said mass in open at Becadel for draft of Suffs. that had arrived to fill up gaps made on 15th. 63 made their communion.

21st. At dressing station at Subway. (Becadel). Moved back to Demancaunt.

22nd. Did little today save slack.. Everyone dirty and worn out. It was difficult to recognise the same men who a few days before had gone up to the line. Then clean and fresh – now dirty, bearded and lousy & weary-eyed.

23rd Sunday. Parade & celebration for Suffolks at 10.30. (5). At 12 same from Middx. (12). Small voluntary service in evening.

25th. Bathed in River Aucre with Jim Parsons, Carlos & Bonnie Heather of Middx. This was the first of many such bathes. They became a daily habit – and we greatly enjoyed them. The weather was very hot. The Aucre is a small muddy rapid stream – and very cold – but we enjoyed our bathes always.

27th. Heard mass at D.H.Q. Breakfast and Chaplains' meeting. Bathe again in evening.

28th. Said mass of S. James at D.H.Q. (2)

29th. Bathe. Concert in field by Shrapnels (Div. party). The 212 R.E. Company put us up a bridge for a stage. It was very successful. The troops sat round on the ground.

30th Sunday. Said mass at the stage in morning early (14cc.) General Brigade Church-parade at 10am and celebration after (26). Went to M.G.C. sports in afternoon.

Voluntary service in evening at 6 by stage again. When it was over we sat for a long time singing hymns.

31st. Bathed & slacked.

1st August. Tuesday. Heard mass at D.H.Q. (Berine). In afternoon went to Mericourt – to meet 2nd Battalion Suffolks. It was Muiden Day and we all wore red roses. Played water polo for 4th Battalion – and Bates, Chaplain of 2nd played for them. It was very exhausting – especially after being pushed under a few times. Old Jack Slater watched us. Had dinner afterwards with Padre Leonard.

3rd. Cycled to Mericourt to 7th F.A. Said mass for them in open. 9 communicants. It was like old times again. Spent morning at Dives Capre with Ritchie and the tent section. Bathe in evening at Demancort with Parsons & old Hooper – the Suffolk funny man.

4th. “2nd Suffolk officers visited us – we played a sixes match – then had dinner. Beer and whisky flowed freely – many speeches were made. Duke of Mametz retired hastily – one had to be carried off.

5th. Usual celebration, breakfast & chaplains’ meeting. Beautiful weather nowadays – we had unbroken sunshine for two weeks.

6th. Sunday. Said mass early – 19 communicants – including the Brigadier. Church Parade at 10 for Middx. & Suffs. Celebrated afterward – there were 60 communicants including another Brigadier & most of 98 Bde staff. Moved to field between Fricant & Becudel – where we stayed a long time. A noisy place, all among the heavies – and at first I expected replies – but we never got them – at anyrate near us.

7th. Saw Hogarth & played bridge with him & M.O’s of 101 F.A. Visited Suffs. at Fricant in afternoon – they were “billeted” in the wood – near the edge. A few five-nines visited us. Noisy evening in camp.

8th. Visited A.D.S. in Mametz village. Went to see 1 Mx in afternoon near Meaulte.

9th. Wedn. Very hot. Went to Quarry A.D.S in morning. Shells. Funerals. This spot was very warm. Batteries near were always getting attention from the Bosche – and the valley (now called Death Valley by the troops) was seldom free of shells. The Bosche was fond of shrapnelling it. Mametz Wood (& Bottom Wood) were always shelled daily. Heavy bombardment that night.

10th. Had tea with 1 Mx. Went to see Ellison at D.H.Q. (a quarry in Meaulte – Albert road.

12th Sat. Said mass for 1 Mx. at 8.30 in open at their camp by Meaulte. 41 communicants. Then went to celebrate for Suffolks at Fricunt. Said mass for A.B.&C. at 11 in Fricunt – 10 communicants. It was rather a “windy” mass. Just as I was beginning a 5.9 dropped in the wood near. But we went on. At 12 I celebrated for D Cmty in a cellar in the village. 12 communicants. Had tea that day at 1 Mx. H.Q. – where I had gone to see Colonel Elpee about a marriage by proxy for one of the men. Dear old Elpee – he was a kind old thing.

13th Sunday. celebrated for 101 F.A. at 11am at their place in Fricunt – Meaulte road. (6cc). Rode over in afternoon to Corps Main Dressing Station at Demaucunt. Tea with Ellison at D.H.Q.

14th. Started for Quarry A.D.S. but got puncture – and caught in rain.

15th. Quiet visit to A.D.S. Wet today.

16th. Said mass for 107 F.A. (16)

17th. Slack day – went to D.H.Q. 7 new officers reported today at Depot.

18th. Stunt in High Wood. Was at Subway A.D.S. seeing wounded.

19th. Visited remains of Suffolk battalion in Fucant wood. These occasions were always very heartrending. So many you knew well were always gone. When you saw new men arriving, you got into the way of speculating as to when & where they would “get it”.

20th. Sunday. Celebrated in Y.M.C.A. at Becordel. Bennett and other of the new officers came. Bennett was always keen on his communions – (R.I.P.) Several fellows from 101 F.A. also came. Preached and celebrated for Suffolks at Meaulte at 11am. (14cc). In the afternoon paid my only visit to Mametz Wood – to see 1 Mx. Never felt

so windy in all my life. I had seen it shelled so often from a safe distance – and as we went into the wood (I was with Choate then 2/M) we saw huge cramp holes – and fresh ones too. Had a cup of tea at H.Q. mess with Doctor & Colonel & others.

21st. Visited Suffs. in morning. Went to Quarry A.D.S. in evening & stayed night there. It was Hogarth's turn up there – but there had been a lot of gas shells & one in the D.S. itself – so Hogarth was a bit done up. The 1 Mx. somewhere about then had got them badly in Mametz Wood when young Ward my confirmation candidate was fatally gassed. Had quiet time at Quarry – took few funerals.

22nd. Came back to Becordel camp. Spent evening with Suffs. at Meaulte – divisional band came & we had a short service – a rather unsuccessful one.

23rd. Said mass of S. Bartholomew in Y.M.C.A. (4). Spent day writing to next of kin of Suffolks.

25th. Visited Suffs. at Fucant again. In the evening I often went to drink & listen to gramophone at 98 M.G.C. lines. We would sit on earth in cool of the evening and listen to whatever records the guns would let us hear.

26th Sat. Went to Quarry A.D.S. for 48 hours. Had warm reception as usual. Bosche shelling with 12 inchers. Just got round the corner in time as he planted one just there shortly after. Some shells! Had lots of funerals. Some very nervy ones. One on top of hill at a battery recently visited with the 12 inch lads – another to a dug out behind Balzantine village where five sergeants & a gunner were all killed & downed by a direct hit. Had good sleep – deep in Bosche dug out it was quieter than the camp back at Becordel.

28th Monday. Returned to Becordel – and had good clean up. Went to A.D.S at Montailbou in evening to bury poor Green of 1 Mdx. – this was also a very warm place – but I was too tired to worry much about that. Scott-Green had been killed in Delville Wood. I walked up – the mud was appalling - rode back in a G.S. wagon.

29th. Said mass Y.M.C.A. at 6.30am (2). Tea at D.H.Q.

30th. Said mass at D.H.Q. Terribly wet all day.

31st. Moved to field near Demancant. Troops came in in small parties from trenches – in terrible condition – caked with mud and weary. Went to line with Doug – Captain Lake Bygate.

Friday 1st September. Moved in lorries to Allonville I was billeted with Cure. Fine village – good bed – beer.

2nd. Said mass in billiard room of chateau where battalion H.Q. was. Billiard table as altar. Move today to Caulas. Shared nice billet with Dubois. Nice old man lived there by himself. Used one of his outhouses as chapel on Sunday. Place very clean – village very quiet & restful. Lovely trees and green grass.

Sunday 3rd. Celebrated for Suffolks 7.30am (4). Church parade 9.30 in field.

Celebrated again 10.30 (8). Held service & celebrated for Middx. at 11.30 (15). Church parade for M.G.C. 7pm. Had dinner there. It became a tradition afterward for me to visit the M.G.C. (& generally T.M.B. were in same place) on Sunday evenings for service & dinner. We always turned on the gramophone – and they always specialised in all manner of drinks, Whisky, Beer, Vermouth, Benedictine, Curacue, sometimes Cherry Rocker or Sloe Gin – sometimes Citre or Champagne. Captain – now Major Jay – Hedgeland-Atherton, Lomax, Brickell (F.O.)

4th Monday. Moved to Remaisnil – whole lot of us slept in farm kitchen. Poor place.

5th. To Bouillers-sur-Gauche. How pleased we all were to find ourselves going further and further from the Somme. Had a nice time here – messed in an estaminet – where we got Dubonnet. There was an angelic looking little girl lived next door.

6th. To Monts-en-Termois not far from S. Pol. Joined C company mess with whom I stayed a long time off and on. Champagne that night.

7th. Went to S. Pol with Gibbs & Rash. Had lively day popping in & out of shops. Lunch at Mikado Café – played chess in evening with Gibbs in B mess.

8th. To Wadorzel – (commonly called “Mangle Worzel). Nice billet where was old garrulous lady. Chess and champagne. Hain got his third pip and celebrated with bubbly.

9th. Went to see Middx. in next village (Sus St. Leger). Hooper came in that night & tickled us all.

10th Sunday. Held all services today in open. Celebrated 7.30 for Suffs in pleasant orchard – with cows looking on (6). 9.30 Church Parade & another celebration (10). At 12 o’clock celebrated for Middx. who had come to same village (5). In afternoon gave them service and after celebrated because majority in the morning missed the place – 20 communicants – among them dear Trevor Benson. Service for M.G.C. at 6.0. at a farm near. Much beer at dinner.

11th Monday. Moved to Gandrienpre. Lived in shelters – very pleasant except when it rained. The house M.D. here.

12th. Tuesday. Said Mass for 10 F.A. at 6.30am (6). Celebration & breakfast & chaplains’ meeting at Pas. A delightful little town. B mess – lovely house with rose garden. Envied Ellison. Visited Middx. at Humber camp in afternoon. In evening played chess with Woodcock.

14th. Went to A.D.S. at Fonquevillers – rode up in ambulance with Col. Arthur etc. A very quiet place – though almost on the line. Ate a lot of apples there in orchard by A.D.S.

15th & 16th. Visited all about – arranging services for Sunday.

17th. Sunday. Celebrated 6.30am for 101 F.A.(5), at 7.30 for Suffolks (6), Church Parade & celebration at 10 for Suffolks (16 communicants). Service at 3.30 for 99 F.A. at Curturelle – Hogarth on leave.

18th. Rain all day – our quarters not pleasant under the circumstances. LECTURED to C Company – on care of body etc. Concert for C company in evening – Hooper helped us out considerably.

19th. Mass breakfast (omelette & splendid coffee in “hotel”) & chaplains meeting at Pas.

20th. Said mass at Curturelle (3). Moved today to Sally-au-bois (village behind Helentrue). Billed in empty house. Village shattered by shells – but houses standing and gardens - & about 5 civilians - old women. Disturbed at night by battery of 6 inch naval guns in field behind. Slept with eye in cellar.

21st. Explored cellars to find place for a church.

22nd. Said mass of S. Matthew (5). Visited Middx. in Helentrue trenches. Better H.Q. & reserve coy. in village. Went to front line and advanced posts with adjutant, Latham.. Had tea with Moly’ company in front line. Peeped “over top” at Bosche & Gaumecuant Park. Sniped back by whiz-bang.

23rd. To Helentruie in evening. Had to cycle up – not wasting any time on way – or in village street.

24th Sunday. Said mass at Sally at 7.30 for Suffolks (3) also at 10 (6), at Helentruie at 12 for Middx. (5). Jim Parsons came. Celebrated in cellar church.

Service for 101 F.A. at 6pm at Cairns.

25th. Said mass for 101 F.A. (7 communicants). Went to line today with John Menhinnick in Tuvre – Major's dug out – a most comfortable & safe place. There was a 15" How. in next garden which shook some when she fired. Fine old day "windy" in the dug out.

26th. Went to celebrate in cellar but none turned up. Went to D.H.Q. in morning. Went round 10th D.C.L.I. in morning & found some Penzance boys. They were working on roads near by.

27th. Said mass for 4th Kings at Bagencunt - had dinner in evening with B Coy. of Middx. who had come back to Sally.

28th. None turned up to mass in morning – still they had the chance. Interviewed by Major Gen. Penney the new G.O.C. in afternoon at Bde H.Q. in Sally. Hogarth also there & Morris the R.C. Padre. Menhinnick & I visited A & B (support & reserve) coys. of Suffs in afternoon. Meant to see front line coys. but not sure of way – and felt little windy.

29th. John & I did some hare coarsing with Windy the dog. Not successful in adding to rations. Buried poor Suffolk lad at Helentruie in afternoon.

1st October Sunday. Said mass at Helentruie for Suffolks at 11.30 (7 communicants). Heavy shelling during the service. Connought came. Tried to find Middx for service – but couldn't. Had long ride for nothing to Gardienpre. This last day in the line this tour. The quietest part we had ever been in & I don't think the Midds. had any casualties – the Suffolks got a few with a "Minnie". I enjoyed this tour very much – I was near the troops & could see them easily & often – and it was possible to minister to them fairly frequently & easily. This was largely due to the chaplains of the division that had been there before who had fixed up temporary churches in most of the villages of the district.

2nd Monday. Moved at night to S. Amand. John & I sent on our kit previously by the mess cart & walked with the dog and many chats (as it turned out after). It was a wet night and pitch dark. Had awful job to find the billet & kit. Finally found myself with billet all on my own. Had awful time with Windy – he got across Madame's pet terrier in middle of night & an amusing situation occurred. I put him outside – but then he got across a huge sheep dog and all the dogs in the village raised bedlam. In the morning I gave him away as a souvenir to a farmer – to his (the dog's) great disgust.

3rd Tuesday. Living with C coy. again. Moved today to Sus St. Leger. Straafed poor Belts Hampton about billeting arrangements. Whenever we got to a new place the officers had to hunt around (hungry & weary) about their billets. It was always so. One envied the men – who got a meal and a billet at once. Got chit from Ellison in evening re leave. Great excitement.

4th. Wedn. Went to Doulleurs in morning in mess cart with Corporal Skipper – ready to go on leave. Lunched at Hotel Quartre garcons – tea at D.H.Q. with Ellison – left for Blighty at 8.

5th. Arrived after usual exasperations & bad language of leave train at Boulogne. Luxury of clean up. Came along with Allen of D.A.C.

6th. Arrived at Coventry at 3am. Leave chiefly taken up with moving into 39 Wren Street.

13th. Friday. Evie & I came up to town – stayed at East Ham.

14th. Left Victoria 7.50 – nearly missed train – Walter & Evie saw me off. Joined Allen on platform – and we came back comfortably together. Slept that night at Y.M.C.A. in Abbeville station – very nice.

15th Sunday. While train waited in siding rushed out & heard mass in Y.M.C.A. Got to Duellieurs in afternoon after an awful journey on train. Got lift in posh car most of way – and found the battalion at Sus St. Leger still. Arrived there at 5. Saw lot of Hogarth & Brandon in those days – and Woods & Williams. All gone now – one way or another.

16th. Went to see Mdx. at Iverney.

17th. Wet. Spent day fixing up rugger team to play Argyles. Suffolks not keen – Windy. Dinner with D.

18th. Said mass in C coy's mess. 10 comunicants. Match off because of packing up.

19th. Moved to Corbre – taken in French busses – driven by French colonial troops. Had awful time at Corbie finding billets. Finally Hignett worked the miracle – and we got decent little room and decent meal – and good billet. Musical teapot stand here.

20th. Lovely slack day. Champagne dinner that night – Hooper in great form. Brandon's headache.

21st. To "Sandpits" at Meaulte –wretched camp. Only redeeming feature was decent C.A. tent – where I held my services. All brigade at Sandpits.

22nd Sunday. Services in C.A. marquee. Celebrated 7.30 (7 comms). Voluntary service for Suffolks at 10am – and for Middx. at 11.00 followed by celebration at 11.30 (41 comms) all well attended – as well as service in evening taken by the C.A. parson. (Greenhall).

23rd. Moved up to Mintaubare with the battalion – poor place near Briguetarie. Went back to transport in evening at Cornay. Wet and no lunch. Slept with Bettinson of 1 Middx. in muddy tent.

24th. Awful mud soon developed. Tank billet near us. Visited Suffolks. Went to D.H.Q.

25th. Went on duty at main dressing station at Cornay Very comfy there – chaplains mess, Corps Chaplain in charge (Parker) awfully nice man. Met lot of parsons there – Mitchell of Muckton & others. We took spells of three hours on duty in the dressing station – and funerals by arrangement. From time to time I paid visits to the A.D.S.

26th. Went to Bde. H.Q. at Guillement to arrange about a funeral. Saw Edwards of Plumstead. Buried body near Trues Wood that French found in bottom of trench. Saw Suffolks in Trues Wood. Place knocked about terribly – Suffolks living under awful conditions.

27th. Quiet day. Visited transport. Hasty mass by Mannering in evening for dying man.

28th. Saw Suffs in Trues Wood. Middx. in action at Leslocup. Poor Trevor Benson killed. Very successful show. Many prisoners taken. Brampton got his M.C.

29th. Sunday. Heard mass at dressing station at 7.30. Busy time in evening. Saw old Cornish friend of childhood days (Bullen) and many others.

30th. Said mass of S.S. Simon & Jude (3). Took funeral – visited transport.

31st. Said mass of All Souls in my tent. Funeral.

1st November. Wedn. Heard mass of All Saints. Three of us chaplains ran daily celebrations in our tents. Funerals – visited transport – on duty that night 12-3.

2nd. Said mass of All Souls – buried poor Joyce in Guilleument cemetery – Harold Pretty rode up with me.

3rd. Visited A.D.S. at Guichy. Took funerals there – had wind up badly. Came back with Edwards. Lots of shelling – road peppered while I had been at Guichy. Had tea with Edwards.

4th. Said mass of All Saints – Edwards also said mass. Visited poor weary Middx. & Suffolks at Cormay & arranged services for the morrow.

5th. The battalions moved early – so services washed out. Said mass at dressing station.

6th. Mitchell celebrated – in vestments. Rejoined the battalion today at Sandpits. Frightful air-raid that night. Awful wind-up – Bosche caught dump at Bray.

7th. Said mass in C.A. (2cc). Helped Greenhall, and had tea with him. Sung evensong and sermon there. Long talk with Pte. Naylor.

8th. Said mass of All Saints (6). Helped again in C.A. tent.

9th. Glorious day – because of move which we hardly dared hope for. By train & march to rest area near Abbeville. Troops awfully tired – billeted at Lieuencourt. Beautiful place.

10th. Changed to next village Baumeunt Battalion H.Q. at Hardenville. B & C at Baumeunt. M.G.C & T.M.B at Limeaux. Middx at Huppy – 212 RE at Limencaunt. Had lovely time here – B & C was in delightful lodge of chateau – duck pond etc. Gorgeous grub. From village at Abbeville – plenty of drinks. Went to see Middx. today at Huppy. They had got billets.

11th Sat. Said mass – 3cc. We used as chapel carpenters shop at B coys mess. Lunched at Limereux with M.G.C. Tea with Middx.

12th Sunday. Went to Huchenneville to celebrate – but no one turned up. 9.30 Church Parade & celebration for Middx. at Huppy 14 communicants. Suffolk parade at 11.0 on Chateau lawn at Huchenneville. Celebrated after in Mairie – sang hymns – 23 cumms. Held service with M.G.C. at Limeux at 4 – tea and dinner there – with Beaucoup gramophone.

13th. Felt seedy – so stayed in bed till lunch – and all day.

14th. Went to Huchenneville.

15th. Said mass at Caumont in carpenter’s shop. (3).

16th. Went to D.H.Q. in morning for chaplains’ meeting – D.H.Q. at Hallencourt. Marque senior chaplain – this his first appearance – also Harrison who got “shell shock”! In afternoon had joy-ride to Abbeville with Williams – great time there.

17th. Buzzing about all day.

18th Sat. Great dinner at night. We did ourselves well at Caumont. Got nice pears etc. from the village – other food and drink from Abbeville – also everyone seemed to be having parcels. Baby Brown with us – and Gough (“Gladys”) for part of the time. Williams, Corbett & I slept at the lodge in gorgeous beds. Two other slept in chateau higher up – B coy. officers slept in opposite wing of lodge.

19th. Sunday. Said mass at Caumont at 7.30 (4). Parade at Huchenneville 10am. followed by celebration in Mairie (24). Parade & mass at Huppy at 11.30 (8). Evensong in billet at Caumont 3.30. 5.30 Parade & mass at Limeux (6). Held latter services in school. Always very cheery services with M.G.C. & T.M.B.

20th. Tea with B coy. of "57th" (1 Middx) – played chess at Limeux with Hedgeland & had dinner there.

21st. Went to dentist. Nothing doing. Lunch and tea with C. coy. of Middx. Cuthbert (Capt. Goring) o/c in those days – James and Bampton also in coy. – Lewis joined it later. Pearce attended. Had many a jolly meal there – they had very comfy billet. Watched footer match between Middx. & Suffs. Middx. won of course.

22nd Wed. Said mass of S. Cecilia (2cc). Fine day. Marque came and stayed to lunch.

23rd. To Limeux, Huppy & Poltieres – busy arranging confirmation classes. Went to boxing show at Huppy. Lunch with B coy. Middx. Cloote o/c. Tea with C. Dinner with old Hooper at Poltieres – his Lewis Rifle school there.

24th. Friday. Medal presentation on Sunday – so went today to Bde. H.Q. to arrange Brigade Church Parade.

25th. Visited dentist – got filling done. Very convenient – got taken and brought back in ambulance car from 99th F.A. at Huppy. Saw footer match. Lunch with Middx (Acoy.) and tea with Goring. Gave confirmation instruction in farmyard at Poltieres 6pm. Was often away thus all day at this time. Enjoyed life greatly at this place. One of the best rests we ever had. The weather was fine – mostly frosty, but we had gorgeous wood fires in open chimney in mess.

26th Sunday. Said mass 7.30 at Caumont (2). The Brigade parade was washed out on account of the rain. Celebrated for Middx. at 12 – saw G.O.C. & co present medals to Battalion. 3.30 Evensong Suffolks. Evensong for Middx. at 6pm in school at Huppy.

27th. Baptised Brandon and Caslum at 6pm in the carpenter's shop.

28th. Said mass at Caumont (3). Chess and dinner at Liseaux with M.G.C.

29th. Celebrated for M.G.C. in orderly room at 7.30. It was awfully cold getting there – freewheeling downhill in frost. Fire in orderly room was great comfort – stayed to breakfast. Co. to Huppy – saw footer match. Tea with C coy. of Middx – dinner with D, Rutter Driver & co..

30th Thursday. To Hallencourt for chaplain's meeting – went to Abbeville with Williams in afternoon. Had to hurry back for confirmation class. Got lost & had awful job cycling back – came miles out of my way – via Punt Remy, Lieucourt, Hallencourt etc!

1st December Friday. Said mass of S. Andrew in Middx. orderly room. Dinner with Harold Pretty (A coy.) at Huchennville. Rotten feeling – he was badly suffering from the blues at this time – had not got over the death of poor Joyce.

2nd. Sat. Another visit to dentist. Poor old Henry also came. Very cold today. Hard frost.

3rd Sunday Said mass & 7.30 at Caumont (5) – morning service and celebration at Huppy (9.30). Suffolk parade at 11. Said mass 11.30 in Mairie (24). At 6pm Church parade at Limeaux and usual dinner in evening.

4th. Lunch with Molz – tea with "Cuthbert".

5th. Reveille 5.30am – march – train – march to Bray. Arrived there weary, cold & hungry. We were taking over from French. No billets. Finally kind old lady with daughter and little girl in Rue de Suzanne took us in and was very kind to us. Corbett & I slept there.

6th & 7th. At Bray – did little.

8th. Said mass at 7 Rue de Corbie (5). Moved today to camp 107. Nice French huts – later we got to like these huts less – they were no good in cold weather – and we struck camp duty & draughty was later on.

9th Sat. Moved to Maurepas Rouvre – arrived there cold & wet & hungry. Our billets were terrible French tents – running with water. A battery of 6 inch naval guns kept us awake. Put candle out every time they fired. Occasional shells added to discomfort.

10th Sunday. Not possible to have any service- battalion went with line in evening. It was always sad to see the boys go off to the line – you knew some would not return. I went back to transport in evening – awful job to find it. It was also a camp with tents (camp 17). I fondly imagined I should find quiet and repose at transport. But the baggage wagon had got stuck in mud and so we couldn't get our valises. Hudson & I spent night waking about. A few shells came over – and later a Bosche plane flew over dropping bombs – one in the camp. I sought refuge in an old trench. This land was reconquered territory – in awful state – trenches – old wire – shell holes – dugouts – rubbish etc.

11th. Hudson & I moved to jolly little French caboose in bank. Felt safer & were comfy.

12th. Middx. in same camp. Visited them in morning – visited Suffolks in reserve line in afternoon. Got very wet. Long communications trench – “Buyeau Martin Paul” – line just in front of Beuchavesues - by Bepaunne Road. Splendid reserve line – formerly French Brigade H.Q. Gorgeous dugouts. This was right brigade position – left brigade in front of Raincourt . Right brigade reserve battalion at Petit Bois Asquith Flats le Forest – left brigade reserve battalion between La Priez farm and Rancunt. Right brigade A. dressing station near “Asquith Flats” in front of Le Forest also brigade H.Q. Left brigade A.D.S.at Le Priez farm.

13th. Awful mud – lived in gum boots – sometimes it got inside these even. Dinner that night with Dobbs & Payne of Middx. – opposite side of camp.

14th. Visited Suffolks at Petit Bois. Good place. Very quiet.

15th. Moved to Middx. to live. Had done six months with Suffolks. Dugout not so comfy as Suffolks were – also more among shells.

16th. Sat. Visited reserve company – Middx. just relieving by companies. Some Suffolks there too. Celebrated in evening in Company H.Q. for 6 coy. Middx. – Goring, James etc. (4). Stayed all night there – awfully cold. Colonel Elpee not well – so made his H.Q. here also. Saw M.G.C. people in same place. Wet and sleet that night. B coy .arrived late – very done up, especially Holman & Choate.

17th Sunday. Celebrated at 11am in Colonel's dugout – John Lock also made his communion. Returned to transport at midday – and had good clean up. This is the only time I actually celebrated in trenches – Helutame was just as close – but we had chapel there.

18th. Got message at midnight from Choate – so went up immediately after breakfast and took funeral of lad who had been killed evening before by heavy shrapnel. When I came back we moved to Camp 21 in Maricant Suzanne Road. Awfully cold. Battalion came in at midnight & later – always came out & went in by companies.

19th. Visited Suffolks & others in same camp – got new orderly (Pte. Smith). Gladly lost bicycle probably to A & S.H. who were all always ready to snap up such trifles.

20th. Not well today – indigestion, diarrhoea, sore throat, & cold! Went to bed early.

- 21st. Thursday. Said mass in hut for Middx. – raining at the time – water dripping on altar. Little body of the faithful around the altar– rest of men at other end of hut – for it was their billet.
- 22nd. Friday. Moved to rotten place near Maurepas. This time were left brigade. Transport lines here – and reserve battalion. Terrible mud. Whizz bangs very frequent. They used to fall among tents and houses – never seemed to do much hurt. Occupied little shanty in a trench with “Big Lewis” – who was at that time assistant T.O. It rained a lot while we were here – and it was difficult to get dry again.
- 23rd. Went to La Priez farm to A.D.S. Nothing of farm left except one cellar. Passed through Combles – only skeleton of a place. It was still a nasty place to go through – but I never got any trouble. Very quiet at A.D.S. – few cases – though heavies all round very busy.
- 24th. Said Mass in Suffolk C coys mess (4). They were at Maurepas. Went to La Priez in afternoon – had tea there – visited Middx. up the road near Rancant. They in awful place.
- Monday 25th. Christmas Day. Had no mass – it couldn’t be done. Stayed in camp all day. The early part of the day was very quiet – the Bosche possibly wanted to have a peaceful Christmas – but our people stirred him up later with “Hows” – rather an unnecessary thing I think – and so did most of the poor devils who were in the trenches. We had nice tea and dinner despite where we were. Had had a parcel from Daisy Cummings day before with a jolly cake. The only parcel or letter that came in time for Christmas. Many came weeks afterwards in a dilapidated condition. So we had Christmas cake for tea. Carramack & Hope came too. Carramack on his way to a course – Hope returning from one. Had a great dinner – the cook had been scouring canteens and shops near & far – and gave us rabbit pie, fowl & Xmas pudding – potatoes he collected from surrounding shell holes. He also cooked the like for H.Q. mess and Dobbs took them up in the evening. The two battalions had gone into the line in the afternoon for a last shunt turn.
- 26th. Rode to Bray in Alice with Pain. Called at Rue de Suzanne & saw old friends. We got awfully wet coming back – and I got a blister.
- 27th. Wed, Moved to camp 112 – on Bray – Meaulte Road. Road there on Alice – was awfully glad to get away to more peaceful surroundings. Went to pictures in evening in the camp. Battalions arrived during the night.
- 28th. Quiet day – had tea with Suffolks – dinner & cards with M.G.C.
- 29th. Moved with transport. Our destination was Brucamps. We got today as far as Argoeuves Rode – got extension of blisters. Came through Amiens and had tea there with Sargeant Windsor. Bought a spoon also. Put up that night in very comfy billet – nice old lady & her daughter very kind to us.
- 30th. Moved on to Brucamps – the rest area. Rode on ahead with Sarg. Windsor. Got thrown off Alice. Usual bother about billets – but got settled at last. Dobbs, Payne & I messed in Estaminet kitchen – I had billet in Mayor’s house nearby. Brucamps quiet little place between Amiens & Abbeville – right off the beaten track. Houses all trouble down. People nice. After getting there went to look for brigade H.Q. to fix up services for the morrow. Went to Domart – a fine old

place, but miles out of my way. H.Q. was at Vanchelles-les-Dumart. M.G.C. there also. 7.M.B. at village beyond Moufflers. Suffolks at Villers-sus-dilly. Div. H.Q. at Lang. Duncan & his troops at Ailly le-haut-Clocher. Had an awfully nice time here. Did some preparation for Confirmation. Used to say mass occasionally in my billet. Col. Elpee went on leave – and Belsham took over the 57th. Played chess a lot with him. Saw great deal of B.H.Q.. Visited Suffs. & M.G.C. a lot. Spent fair amount of time in bed. Had services in the ecole cummunale.

31st Sunday. Voluntary service (i.e. 20 from coy & one officer!) at 11.30 in school – followed by celebration (12cc). Tea Evensong & dinner at Vanchelles with M.G.C. They had gorgeous mess in estaminet hut from which they got the push later by Bde. H.Q. Weather fairly decent. It was very refreshing life in such a quiet place. Saw lot of C coy. & other coys. at this time. Clynes & Maisie turned up here – and many new men.

Monday 1st. Said mass of the Circumcision . Went to D.H.Q. – visited Suffolks on way back at Villes. That night Col. Elpee gave a dinner to all the officers of the 57th at Battn. H.Q. Awfully good grub – and drinks- but a very unexciting affair. No larks. Small speech by colonel & reply from Bigge as senior officer. Everyone bored to tears by dinner. This all the more remarkable, because the Colonel was such a nice old boy.

2nd. Said mass of St. John. Went with Hooper to see Suffolks in afternoon. Betty & Parker came to dinner with Dobbs & me that night. Pain deposed from T.D. Bigge taken it on.

3rd. Went to M.G.C. for mass. They had forgotten it & no one turned up. Had breakfast there. Tea with Goring that day. Baptised L/C Dixon that evening in my billet. James present & Corporal Aylott.

4th. Celebration & meeting at Ailly. We had breakfast in estaminet – fine omelette. Celebration in concert hall – meeting in Duncan’s billet. Grundy new chaplain came for first time. Attached R.W.F. He was very struck with care & comfort of chaplain’s job. Later three or four days in transport line at Frise sent him to hospital. “nuff sed”! Felt seedy that day. Went back to Brucamps & went to bed. Got up for dinner – Baker & Carrmack came to dinner. Martin did as well.

5th Friday. Stayed in bed till lunch. Went to Ailly in afternoon. Had tea with Duncan.

6th. Said mass – went round and fixed up services.

7th Sunday. Parade & celebration in school at 9.30 for Middx. – 12 comms. 11.30 same at Villes for Suffolks – held services in large loft – 20 comms. In afternoon went to the confirmation at Ailly. It was very nice. Only Sargeant Everson & L/C Dixon came of my candidates – Brandon went away that morning to works battery – Corporal Caslam got to Ailly - & hadn’t sense enough to find the place – Gordon away sick. We all had tea after in the estaminet – and I got lift part of way back in Flying Corps car. Voluntary service at 6pm at Meufflers for T.M.B. R.E. & ASC.

8th. Dinner with A coy. – Henry Baker & Carrmack. Went to C coy. concert in estaminet. Sat up late.

- 9th. Had rite in morning. Football match in afternoon between Suffs. & Middx. Tea with B. Holman, Holton, John Lock, Parkhouse, Murray. Dinner with D- Driver Rutter & co. Also Viner.
- 10th Said mass of St. Stephen. Tea with C coy. Suffolks Wisden, Cabbitt, Williams & Gladys. Saw other companies. New officers, Hare, Rigby, Browne.
- 11th..Thursday. Usual celebration & chaplains meeting at Ailly. Lunch with Duncan. Brought Grundy back to Brucamps to speak at National Mission meeting that night. Had placard in billets with “What is wrong with the Church – come and give your views” meeting in school at 5.30. Nice little show. Grundy came to B.H.Q. to dinner. Played chess often with Belsham.
- 12th. Friday. Went riding with Dobbs. Dobbs very posh & clean. Fell with Patsy and spoiled his appearance.
- 13th. Sat. Visited Suffs. Went to A & B coys. Middx concert that evening. Sang. Much bubbly at BS.
- 14th. Sunday. Said mass of Holy Innocents in billet at 8.30. G.O.C. came to present medals in the morning. Amusing incident occurred. Standing with Bigge, Parker & Bettinson by haystack to watch proceedings & hear remarks of G.O.C. He took salute & then looked round before clearing his throat. Saw me – shouted out “Come in parade Padre – and bring the others too!”. Undignified moment followed while we crawled through fence before the whole battalion – and stood in a row at attention. Parade & mass at 11.30 in school – 7 came. Service at Mufflers 2.30 for 212 R.E. coys. etc. Evensong at Brucamps at 6pm.
- 15th. Spent afternoon and evening with Suffolks. Very cold today. Transport moved.
- 16th. Slack day at Brucamps Moving in morning.
- 17th. Wed. Left at awful hour. Breakfast 3am. Left at 3.30. March to Pont-Demy to entrain. It snowed. Apart from the cold & the dampness where the snow penetrated, it was very romantic – the pipes played all the way – it sounded very pretty. I marched lot of the way with Baker – and we talked of books and pleasant things of the days before the war. Had long wait (as usual) at Pont-Remy for the train. Finally reached Bray in dark about 10.30. Marched to camp 111 in Bray – Meaulte Road. Awfully cold. Fairly decent hut.
- 18th. Battalion developed German measles – and we were isolated in 111 camp for three weeks. We had a very happy time. The troops were highly elated – for it was the most bitterly cold weather – and the camp though cold was infinitely preferable to the trenches. We made ourselves comfy in the officers’ hut and spent the time playing chess & cards and the gramophone. Holman had brought some new records from England which we played incessantly – “Have you seen the Ducks go by” – “Yaaka Hula” – “Hello how are you?” – “When Maud put her new bathing costume on” – “Every little girl can teach me something new” – “If you wonder what a duke should be” – “Underneath the stars” etc. Most days I took the gramophone into the measles hut and played to the men. We got up very late most mornings – always after breakfast. It was a jolly time – we all got to know one another well.
- 19th. Went to Bray.
- 20th. Went to see Suffolks at Suzanne – camp 19. Beaucamp measles at 111.

- 21st. Sunday. Parade and mass in one of the huts at 11. 8 came. Service in measles hut in afternoon. Went to pictures in evening. Shortly after they closed down the cinema on account of the measles. In those days the "Midds" were the envy of all men. Had long yarn with Colonel in evening. He lived in same hut - & at nights was always ready for a yarn. It mostly turned on India & the East – he was very interesting on these topics.
- 22nd. Yarn with Duncan in morning. Everyone anxious to catch the measles. Always tense excitement when "Soda Sol" returned from sick parade to know how many new cases.
- 23rd. Played gramophone in measles hut. Went to canteen at Bray with Baby Holton.
- 24th. Awfully cold. Great concert in evening
- 25th. Arrival of coke from Corbre – great jubilation – concert in measles hut in evening. Officer troupe led by Padre – performed to troops. Viner in great form.
- 26th. Went to Grise Town cemetery. Found Belmans' & Buchanans' graves, also Harris of Suffs. Later the Col. had decent crosses made & put up, and we wrote to their people. They had been killed in Les boefs show. I had seen Buchanan & Harris in Dressing station at Carnay. Lot of N.C.O.'s and men of the division buried there.
- 27th. Stayed in all day. Played gramophone to measles.
- 28th. Said mass in officers' hut at 11. (10 came). Evensong for measles 2.30. In the address got several responses from men to effect that the measles could hardly be regarded as an obstacle on life's way. Evensong for others at 5.30 in concert hut.
- 29th. Monday – went to D.H.Q. (in chateau at Suzanne). Visited Suffs. & M.G.C., lunched there – at camp 19. Grand concert at 111 in evening got up by Dobbs.
- 30th. Went to Bray with Carrmack. Played gramophone.
- 31st. Walk with Henry. He was a cheery fellow – a great source of amusement to all, and a good soldier.
- 1st February 1917. Felt fed up. Played chess.
- 2nd. Went to celebration and chaplains meeting at D.H.Q. Went for walk with "John" in afternoon – we examined aeroplane at Flying School. John very interested in planes. Captain Hawley & Capt. Preston with the battalion at this time. Lately come
- 4th, Sunday. Preached and celebrated at 11am (5cc). At 5.30 preached to measles men.
- 7th. Wedn. "Chaplains' meeting and mass at D.H.Q. Went on to Bde H.Q. after for leave warrant at Frise. Got away that night from 111. Got lifts in cars, lorry etc. to Corbie. Dinner at Hotel De La Poste – Murray & Holman turned up. Left Corbie 11pm in splendid train (ex hospital). Grub served on train. Got to Havre 3pm (Thursday). Tea with Parker & Thomson at Topsy's. Time for good clean up. Left Havre 11.30pm.
- 9th – 18th at Coventry. Left after High Mass & stayed at East Ham till 20th. (Helping myself to extra day)
- 20th. Shrove Tuesday – left Waterloo 4pm. Walter saw me off. Came back with Nobby Clark of Lincolns.
- 24th. Got to battalion in camp 19, Suzanne at 1pm.
- 25th. Preached & celebrated 11.30. 25 communicants. Moved to Curlu in afternoon. Comfy dug out – this another position we were taking over from the French. Our

division again holding extreme right of line – this time extending to the Somme river. Divisional H.Q. (Advanced) at Curlu. Bde H.Q. at Howitzer Wood. 21st brigade Clary sector – led up by Mary Avenue – left bicycle at D.C. Team led up to by Maud Avenue. A.D.C. Clary & P.C. Team. (Rode Wood). Rode Wood rather horrid – sometimes shelled heavily – though you were safe if you were dug well in. Unfortunately the dug outs there were very poor. Howitzer fine place – little shelled – and absolutely safe dug outs. Mary Avenue & Clary were unhealthy.. Maud Avenue little shelled – except at top end. Towards end of our stay the Bosche shelled along roads further back – as far as Curlu. But all while we were there, it was very comfy and safe at Curlu. Weather very cold, most of river frozen over – communication trenches hard and clean. When the thaw came later they all collapsed & became bogs. Saw lot of 18th Midx. in Maud Avenue most days.

26th. Visited Suffs. in afternoon at Howitzer Wood.

28th. Mass & Chaplains meeting at rear D.H.Q. Suzanne. Visited 99th F.A. Monacu Farm. Dinner with Hudson & co at Fuse Bend.

1st March Thursday Very fine day – visited Road Wood. Saw Suffolks & M.G.C. Jay back with latter & with crown up. Came back with wounded King's officer. Saw one of our balloons burnt that evening at Fuse. Bosche had tried shelling it. New plane came over – pretended to be hit & circled down to balloon & let off at it. Two occupants came out at once in parachutes. One got mixed up with burning body of balloon & was badly damaged. Dinner that night with M.G.C.

2nd March. Visited Middx. at Howitzer Wood. Came across remains of dead Hun in Hem Wood. Had dinner with Hooper that night at Curlu in his little hut.

4th. Sunday. Celebrated at 7am for 18 Middx. at Curlu (4). Baker came with me. Had nice bath there later. Said evensong same place later – and dinner there also. Terribly tense H.Q. mess.

5th Monday. Snow again. Went to Rode Wood – saw A & B coy Middx. Trenches hard & white.

6th. Took funerals at Ham Farm. Played chess with Early. Moved to Suzanne. Good billet.

7th. Marched with battalion to camp 12 near Saily Laurette – awful march & awful camp. Snow.

8th. Moved to camp 124 at Saily Laurette. A very nice camp. Suffolks there also. Very cold.

9th. Visited M.G.C. & T.M.B. other side of village.

10th. Had tea at M.G.C. with Hooper & Kennedy. Awful little place they had in old dilapidated huts. We were very well off at 124. There was a nice G.A. hut there which I used for all services.

11th. Sunday. Capt. Hanley new o/c 1 Middx. Col Elpee went home from Curlu. Prestin 2nd in command. Said mass 7.30 – 9 comms. Parade Suffolks at 10am, mass 10.30 (18), Middx at 11. Mass at 11.45 (18 comms). Evensong for patients of Corps rest station men at 9.30. Evensong for M.G.C. & T.M.B. 6pm. Dinner there of course

13th. Tues. Chess with Hedgeland at M.G.C.

- 14th. Went on route march round by Mennicourt with C coy.
- 15th. Did some revolver practice with Carramack at the range – also fired Lewis rifle.
- 16th. Walked to Curlu – it was lovely along canal bank. Fine day. Chaplains’ meeting in G.A. institute chapel. O’Rorke gave us address. Gave up “gaspers” today.
- 17th. Refereed in great match between Middx. & Suffs. Dinner with D coy. Suffs. Woodcock etc.
- 18th. Sunday. Another fine Sunday. These services went so well. Mass at 7.30 (12). Parades 10 & 11 – mass at 11.45 (31), Evensong 3.30. Went to M.G.C. & T.M.B. again 6pm. My last evening visit to them. It was rotten. I liked giving them up least of all my units.
- 19th. Monday. Joined 18th Middx. (Pioneers). The c/o L/Col. Stow was anxious to have a chaplain. Had had several for short time. Owing to corps arrangements the chaplain that would have been with pioneers was kept for corps work. So Marque asked me to go to the 18th for my last three months – leaving 98th Bde. to Hogarth – and remaining still nominally chaplain to one of the 98th Bde battalions. I didn’t like leaving the old brigade – but thought I should go. So I moved today. 18th H.Q. were at Aubigny other side of Corbie with A coy at Laurette-Breliere. Col. Stow sent mess cart to fetch me. Had tea at Battalion H.Q. & then went on to A coy – arriving there about dinner time. They were very nice to me. Hill o/c Bennett, Wright & Bradbury (Bing Boys) Day & Stocker – also Boreham at present at H.Q.
- 20th. Went out with the company on a route march. Played footer in afternoon. In evening visited men in billets. This was my usual practice daily. It was rather cold – but a nice quiet little place on the banks of the Somme. Amiens within easy reach. Had dinner that night with Haslett whose H.Q. was also at Laurette.
- 21st. Wed. Had day in Amiens with Bradbury. We took the gramophone to be repaired. Had jolly day there – shopping etc. Bought lot of spoons. Had good look at the Cathedral. A beautiful place – though rather spoiled just then by sandbags – Amiens much subject to air raids. We walked in by the canal bank – back by the road. It snowed on way back.
- 22nd. Played football. Snow & sunshine mixed. Great place for eggs. A coy. wallowed in eggs. Ate I think 700 while at Laurette.
- 23rd. Went to Amiens in afternoon. “Chingy” Bennett. Rode there on cheval. I had fine swift horse – he had “Tommy” the company charger. Had fine bath there. Did more shopping. Fire that night at Laurette. 11th coy. R.E. arrived that evening and took over old prisoners’ camp as billet. This went on fire. Great excitement. Villagers excited. Fire engine heard clanking along village street when fire nearly over – then no water. Church bell also tolled towards end – whether as fire alarm or to tell the passing of the fire
- 24th. Route march – revolver practice in evening with Bradbury, Boreham etc.
- Sunday 25th. Said mass for A coy. in Mairie at 7.30 – (2 comms). Church parade in hut at 9.0 followed by another mass (6). Then rode to Aubigny and had parade and celebration (4) for battalion in school. Nice evensong at 6pm. Went to live with B coy. – a very merry lot – Coles, Banks, Taafe, Clay, MacAdams, Thomas & Colvin.

- 26th. Wet day - lectured to B coy. in huts. Rode to Laurette in afternoon on Coles' charger – a fiery beast. Made me very stiff and gave me blisters.
- 27th. Played lots of chess.
- 28th. Spent morning bomb throwing in field with Banks & Taafe. Great fun. Went to Corbie in afternoon with Thomas – heard “shrapnels” in concert hall. He took his platoon. We marched back singing “Take me back to dear old Blighty”.
- 29th. Boxing stunt. “B” was a great company for leg-pulling – especially in trying to provoke quarrels. Did it today in MacAdam & the Padre – so after lunch we had a three round “set to” with the gloves. It was very exhausting work – but I think Mac. got the worst of it.
- 30th. Went to Corbie in morning. Met Harrison – old friend of 7th F.A., now L/c & attached to Seige Park. We had long yarn and quaffed bubbly together. Went to Laurette in afternoon. Refereed in tug-o-war between A coy. & 11th R.E. Got lift back at night in lorry from Amiens of which the driver was “blotto” & who did wonderful things with the lorry.
- 31st. Went to 4th Army H.Q. to see D.C.G. He wanted to talk to me re. contract. But his car broke down & he didn't arrive. Had tea and dinner at H.Q. mess – great theological discussions.

1st April Sunday. Said mass at Aubigny 7.30 (2). Parade & mass at 9.30 (12). Then rode to Laurette & had parade and celebration (8). Evensong at Aubigny at 6. Went to live with C company this evening. Major Best - White (George the Tank), Hartley, Tollenache, Rogers, Skinner, Clayton.

2nd Monday. On the move – marched to Villers-Bocage. Day ended in awful snow. Got decent billet with George.

3rd. To Beauval. Billeted in tents – great disgust. Marque called. Had letter from 7 A.G.C. which I easily answered. Small billet fire that evening.

4th. To Barly – C coy only there. Rain all the way there. Got fairly decent billet. George shared it with me. A nice quiet village in a valley. Lots of trees. A nice girl in our billet. George & I nearly fell in love with her. Champagne lunch when we arrived at Barly in estaminet. At this time we were all looking forward to a great push. This again was to be the push. We were to be of the Army of pursuit. We were all carrying two iron rations in our packs, and all had extra supplies of tobacco & chocolate.

5th. Had lovely lazy morning. George & I lay in sun on a bank and smoked. The weather was very beautiful – a spring morning. Moved in afternoon to Gronchys – marched through Duellars. Miserable billets. All C coy. offs. slept in same room. Mess in estaminet. Much beer.

6th Good Friday We were fortunate in having a day of rest today. Lots of rain. Held two services at 12 & 6 in old canteen. Nice little services – went well.

7th To St. Armand. Felt we were getting back to familiar scenes. We got a mess again in quiet little estaminet – Café des Alleas. Had wearisome hunt round the place for church – all in vain. We arrived at 4pm & were lucky to be there till Monday.

8th Easter Day. Very nice day – weather fine. Used ecole communale for celebration. Celebrated at 7.30am (9). Parade for 18 Middx. at 10.30 in farmyard around dung

- pit. Celebrated again 11. (28), then had parade in open for 1st Queens' (R.W.S.) who had just arrived. Had lunch at Queens' H.Q. Full place for evensong at 6pm.
- 9th. "Z" day. The great attack began. We moved to Beaumont-Les-Loges. Living with D coy. now. Awful billet. Very cold weather – we had empty room – sans windows or any furniture or flooring.
- 10th. Hanging about all day. Expecting to move. Played lot of chess with Buesst, Fisher, Cotham, Brineham & Skipper Simmons, also in D coy.
- 11th. Paraded today to move. But didn't. Very heavy snow. A & B moved to Mercatel.
- 12th. Dinner with C. They were in big house & very comfy.
- 13th. Visited A & B at Mercatel – a village in recently evacuated area. Trees all cut down – houses all blown up. Roads & bridges mined. Country laid absolutely waste. A & B were bivouacking in fields and among mines. Came back in lorry with Doctor.
- 14th. Sat. Fine.
- 15th. Sunday. Said mass in Aid Post (3cc). Evensong in same place 6.30. Poor show.
- 16th. Went to live at H.Q. Awfully sticky. Doctor (J.M.B. Simon) most cheerful. Col Stow – Major Jaudes (2nd in command), Chapman Q/M, Shaw (T.O.), Hills (Signals), Hands (Adj). All cheerful out of mess.
- 17th. Rode to Mercatel with Doctor. Came back through Arras. It was very interesting – only there was an intensely cold & blinding hail storm at the time.
- 18th. Tea with D. Long talk with G.D. at night in C.E.M.S. etc.
- 19th. Moved to Bayelles. A destroyed village – we bivouaced in a nice field – and all the troops at once fell upon the remains of the village and in a short time a little village sprang up – bivvies of varying shape and design and comfort. Doctor & I built one – very convenient & comfy – half a dug out – on side of cemetery bank.
- 20th. Spent whole day enlarging our dug out. Got it very comfy at last. Stretchers were used the other for beds; a table, fire place, flooring etc. As time went on we improved it much. Doctor erected a fine shower bath.
- 21st. Sat. The Church was built. It was begun & finished today. Very nice when finished – a most convenient thing to have. Later the sparrows & swallows built in it. Had celebrations there several mornings in the week. Celebration and evensong on Sundays. Always full for evensong. Nice little altar for which I made pair of candlesticks – got cross from churchyard. Bell hung outside that came from Beaumaris – probably gas-alarm bell. Went to Hemm today to visit A.D.S. methodical shelling going on in a battery.
- 22nd Sunday. Said mass 6.30am (3). Went to S.Lager – "breezy". Place shelled frequently. Wrote G.S. article in afternoon. Evensong 6.30.
- 23rd. Fine. Got up at 4,30am. Big stunt today. Said mass for the attack at 6.30. 98 Bde attacked up Hindenburg line. Exciting fight. Bosche counter attack successful – but they retired again later. Many hundreds of prisoners – Suffolks took 700. Also many casualties, young Woods – S/M Woodward – Parkhouse – Murray – Henry, Baker all killed. Went to dressing station at Heninel in morning and afternoon. Saw lots of old 98th Bde friends there wounded. Spinks, Arden (T.M.B.), Evans, Rash & prisoners cage at Bayelles busy today.

- 24th. Tuesd. Lovely summers day – went to Hemm in morning. Suffolks came out to Byelles. Officers came to dinner with us that night. Very much cut up. Very sad to miss so many old friends.
- 25th. Said requiem at 6.30. Went with Smith to see 1st Middx. beyond Hermin. They also badly cut up. Felt very sad & fed up.
- 26th. 18th moved to Beaumaris. All very sick at leaving our comfortable camp. At Beaumaris doctor & I busied ourselves in making dug out. Got pit made – slept in it that night with waterproof cover overhead.
- 27th. Moved back to old place at Bayelles – to our great delight – C & D coys remained at Beaumaris – to work on roads in that part. A & B doing same at St. Lager etc. Division going out, but leaving us in. We were very glad. We got some shells that night – one dropped slap among the bivouacs – but strange to say, no one was touched. Doctor & I awoke & heard the men talking. The shells were “Percies”, ie. high velocity six inch – with the new percussion cap which enabled the shells to go off without digging into the earth – not a pleasant form of missile at all.
- Sat. 28th. Had a fine bath. The Doctor had rigged up a most convenient shower bath. The River Cojeil flowed by the bottom of the camp – ‘twas only a small stream but we were able to get plenty of decent water. The weather was very hot. so a cold splash was very acceptable.
- 29th. Sunday. Said mass at 6.30am (2). Visited A & D. at Beaumaris. Evensong in church at 6.30.
- 30th. Went to live with B coy. Visited A & B at S. Lager.

- 1st May. SS Philip & James. Said mass. Went to Beaumaris & spent day there – and stayed night. Fine day. Nice service in open at 6.0 pm.
- 2nd. Said mass at Beaumaris at 6.30am (3). Came back to Bayelles.
- 3rd. Thursday. Great bombardment. Said war mass 6.30. Fine day – visited A & B at work.
- 4th. Hilarious time at Beaumaris. Clayton was having a bath in the open. We chased him round naked - & threw dirt at him. I chased him with a stinging nettle.
- 5th. Sat. Very hot & fine. Went to Boisieux-au-Munt to fix up service with D.S.C. Senior C.F. always tried to inflict a service every Sunday for everyone, & would delegate us to fix them up. I went generally – but didn’t press people, so it wasn’t surprising that my journey today was in vain. Had tea with Allen at D.A.C. at Boring Becquerelle. Great thunderstorm in evening. Tyke and Pointon joined the battalion about this time. Tyke went to D coy. Pointon to C. Rogers & Skinner got badly wounded one evening in Arras.
- 6th. Sunday. Said mass 6.30 – Allen came. Held Parade for 100th Bde at 10 – it was a wash out. Strong wind – couldn’t hear or be heard – so I closed down. Service lasted about five minutes. Celebrated for them after in our church – six of 100 T.M.B. came – all 16th K.R.R. Jolly evensong at 6.30.
- 7th. Went to S. Lager in morning. Great Ardine strafe as I came back. Got wind up a little. Rain of fragments. Man had had leg cut off near by just previously.
- 8th. Wet. Little church got wet. Said mass of Missions. Visited Beaumaris. More ragging. Had bombing stunt with bricks & empty bottles. Got several wounds.

- 9th. Wedn. To S. Lager in morning. Shrapnels came and gave jolly good show in evening. Gas alarm that night. Dealt with it from beds.
- 10th. Thursd. Said mass of Our Lady. To Beaumaris – nice evening. Revolver practice with Pointer & George. Nearly killed “Tank” with my “Spanish How”. Storm.
- 11th. Said mass at Beaumaris. Returned to Bayelles. 1st battalion came to Bayelles. Busy today digging in. Doctor & I in fine new place built by “Trio” – there had been a lot of casualties near us from “Percy”, so Colonel made us all dig in. I sandbagged the outside – Doctor dug himself in.
- 12th. Sat. Spent most of day with 1st Battalion in field above us. Dinner with C coy. of 1 Mdx. By Lewis & Pendall.
- 13th. Sunday. Said mass 6.30. (7). 10am Parade and celebration for Suffolks (other side of village) (23 communicants). Lunch at 57th H.Q. during which Bosche shrapnelled balloon near us. Watched cricket match in evening between 1st & 18th. Evensong 6.30. Then went to 78th Lib-Coy for evensong. Very keen lot. Had dinner there – Col. Beckwith, Wells etc.
- 14th. Lunch with D coy. Suffs. In evening took funeral of 212 coy. R.E. Officer at Hermin Communal Cemetery. Dinner with 1 Mdx. Went to live with 1 Mdx. today.
- 15th. Tuesd. Said mass. Went to see Pioneers at S. Lager & Croiselles – met Bresst . bringing two of his men back to be buried. Said service over them at S. Lager.
- 16th. To chaplains’ celebration & meeting at D.H.Q. Hamelin court. Marque had nice little chapel in Armstrong hut. Lunch with 16th K.R.R. Dinner with 18th T.M.B. Holton, Williams & Humphrey.
- 17th. Ascension Day. Said mass at 6.30. Went up to Hinderlung Trench with Simmons. Very windy, but it was quiet while I was there – though some spot strafed just after & man of D killed. Lunched with 212 R.E. coy. in sunken road. Belsham there – working with R.E. pro tem. Went in to see Pioneers at S. Lager & came back with them.
- 18th. Took funerals at S. Lager & Hermin. Fine breeze all day.
- 19th. Got up late. Bosche plane got lost in evening & flew low over us – great excitement – Lewis guns opened on him – Archies very low. Said mass for 4th Kings at 11am. They were in next field. Visited A coy. at work near Croiselles building Bde H.Q. Fine view of trenches & bombardment. A beautiful day again today.
- 20th. Sunday. 33rd Division did stunt again today. Said mass 6.30. Went to A.D.S. at Hermin in morning. Evenson at 6.0. in church – then went to 78th lab coy for evensong. Stayed dinner. They were near Hamelin court now.
- 22nd. Wet all day. Celebrated 6.30am.
- 23rd. To D.H.Q. in morning. Much beer at D coy. in evening.
- 24th. Thursday. Celebrated and gave address at Chaplains’ meeting at 10. Had celebrated 6.30 at Bayelles. Tea at 1 Mx. H.Q. – they back at Bayelles – (other side of village). Had dinner with Lewis at 78th Lel. Coy. (Webb his brother-in-law)
- 25th. Buried poor Woods near Hunderlung trench. He had been killed 23rd April. In evening heard bomb go off in next field where 4th K.L. were. Buried the victim shortly after. Bosche plane did daring raid on us that night. Doctor & I going to

- bed at time. Plane buzzing – Doc. says “Is that a German?” Padre “ Oh no, they wouldn’t venture so low”. Bang, bang, bang, bang! went the bombs immediately. Much wind up all round. Poor old Billy the Stallion killed – a few men hurt.
- 26th. Said mass – 4 of 1 Mx. came. Fine day.
- 27th Whit Sunday Said mass 6.30 (5). 1 Mx. Parade & Mass at 10am (18). Said mass in church at 12 (5). Lunch at Mx. H.Q. Evensong 6.30.
- 28th. Walked to meet George at S. Leger. Tea with D coy 4th Suffs – Tollemache, Euraught, etc.
- 29th. Celebrated 6.30 – went to D.H.Q. with Doctor – he after leave. Tea there. Shells at night.
- 30th. Meeting & celebration at D.H.Q. Buried 14th N.F. in afternoon who was killed night before.
- 31st. Said mass for last time in the little church (4cc). Fine day. Moved to Bailleulment. Lovely place – summer had come while we were at Bayelles. Nice to see cows & chickens again – and trees & flowers & women & children. Living with A coy. – got nice billet in farmhouse. Nice orchard where could sit & read.
- 1st June. Read Wells new book “God Invisible King” – didn’t think much of it. Revolver practice with Boreham. Went to Bailleulval. Night ramble with George. Used to go round most nights after dinner to see him – C coy. had lovely place for mass in orchard.
- 2nd. Sat. Played cricket for A against C.
- 3rd Sunday Celebrated 7am – Parade & celebration 10am (13). Evensong 6.30. All in recreation hut near church. A very useful & convenient place.
- 4th. Visited Duncan at Berlas-au-Bois.
- 5th. Shrapnels came. Good show.
- 6th. Went to Adinfer Wood to Chaplains’ meeting. Fine place. Very hot walk there with Duncan. Got warrant while there. Jewish chaplain (Michael Adler) came in. Walked back with James & Duncan. Div. Band at Bailleulment in evening.
- 7th. Said mass of Corpus Christi at Berles-au-Bois – in little chapel. Lot of K.R.R. came, Duncan served. Breakfast with D. after. Farewell dinner with D. coy.
- 8th. Farewell dinner with C. coy.
- 9th. Sat. Said good-bye to Duncan in morning at Berles. Watch cricket match with H.L.I. in afternoon. Dinner with B. coy. Had “the dirty” done on by the “sailor lads” of G. – with eggs.
- 10th. Sunday – celebrated 8am (4). Parade & mass at 10 (18). Evensong 6.30.
- 11th. Monday. Tremendous thunderstorm in morning beginning at 1am. All awake. Had bath in it at 4 o’clock. Breakfast 4.30 – this due to get parades over before heat came with. Came away in mess cart – train at 11.30 at Warlincourt. Good train too. Boulongue at 5.30 – saw little John but he couldn’t cross. East Ham at midnight.

FINIS

R.I.P.

Walter Packard	4 Suffolks	Fred Waterman	1st Middx.
Alfred Marsam	“ “	Ernest Ward	“ “
Eric Norton	“ “	John Ailsly	“ “
Pawsey	“ “	Trevor Benson	“ “
Victor Bedwell	“ “	Laurence Shaw	“ “
Eric Joyce	“ “	A.H.Maisie	“ “
Glanfield	“ “	R.P. Dickason	“ “
George Harris	“ “	Arthur Henry	“ “
L.P. Bennett	“ “	Frank Parkhouse	“ “
H.W. Woods	“ “	W. Murray	“ “
S/M Woodward	“ “	Lionel Baker	“ “
Belts Hampton	“ “		

Harry Lomas 98 T.M.
