

APR France
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He told us that the stunt at **ARRAS** resulted in a big advance --- capture 15,000 prisoners. 4 Tanks took part in it. (We heard officially that 1,500 had been taken). Bon moonlight night. 4 letters. B.Geng. (?)

Tue 10 (677-134). Up at 11.40 a.m. Shaved. (**Jacka & patrol , also Art Officers, went to villages last night to find Fritz. He had not gone as we had thought so stunt will have to come off**.) Tanks too late for start & it did not come off. To O.P. on line in morning & took over phone from McMahon. Keys on in afternoon & came back with him. Stunt to come off tomorrow.

Wed 11 (678-135). Phone m.n. to 4 a.m. Run to 15 Bty for O.C. at 2.10 a.m. Called officers at 4 a.m. stunt started at 4.30 a.m. Cold as snow was lying on ground. Tanks led into action but were too slow. 48th Batt. & 44th Batt. were cut off & 3,000 lost. Mess-up. Barrage put up to stop Fritz. Up on line with Gunson. Shells as usual. Saw Fritz's B prisoner duck from his own shells. Huns shelling our stretcher bearers passing old tank. Relieved McMahon at O.P. with Lt. Hay. Snowed all night.

Thu 12 (679-136). Up about midday. Out on line & stayed at O.P. with Mr Hay. Wet all evening & afternoon. Shells round joint. On phone till midnight. Bty. in action till then & bit of shell hit Sgt. Vidler in arm. Went away. He had just come back from hospital.

Fri 13 (680-137). Up at 10 a.m. On line after dinner. At O.P. with Mr Hay. Back 6.30 p.m. Shells everywhere. Casualties in the valley all the week.

Sat 14 (681-138). Down to W.L. Canteen. Bought for Spooks. (Trim, Wilson, Dahlsen back.) (?) fat from McCarty. Jam & syrup from 45th. Back to pits about 4.30 p.m. Mac, Pugh, 2nd, 3rd Div.s out throwing O.P. line over ridge. Back about 12.35 a.m. Made pancakes for them. Guns going all night.

Sun 15 (682-139). Should have gone on phone 6.30 to 8.30 a.m. but Fritz hopped over & broke thro' lines in an 18 Battalion raid to blow up guns in our valley & 1st Div. near Baignicourt. He succeeded in getting a battery of the latter but was driven back with heavy losses. S.O.S. about 5 a.m. & we went to O.P. Great sight. Infantry standing to in sunken roads at Norieul. Rifles, machine guns going a treat. Saw Fritz coming over ridge. Then two of our 18 pndr batteries got out in the open & let him have it. & the Infantry did the rest. We got him on the move & could see our chaps chasing & firing at him & bringing in prisoners who passed alongside our battery. Fritz got to within 500 yds of our guns. Mr Keys came to relieve Mr Hay but had not been there long .

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when we came back where orders were received to shift back to last position to cover 1st Div (Lagnicourt). Guns just out when S.O.S. ordered from usual lines & we had to run guns into pits & fire again. Left here with Mac & guard tyo look after dugouts, etc. Pancakes for supper. Mac & Northage out for souvenirs stopped at sunken roads.

Mon 16 (683-140). Up at 12.15 p.m. Had lunch. Went to see dead Huns. Doug P. & Barraclough wandered round all last night on new O.P. line. Barraclough lost himself for a couple of hours getting back here from battery tonight also. Ammunition up.

Tue 17 (684-141). Up at 10 a.m. to patrol O.P. line just as McCay lobbed here. He roared. Just as well he didn't go to O.P. line as line was all to hell. Fixed line & had first meal at 4 p.m. Mac to O.P. to F sub gun about lunch-time. At sub gun at tea time. Line to 45th Bty. On phone 2 on 4 off. 2 whizz-bangs nearly in dugout about 3 p.m.

Wed 18 (685-142). Pulled out about 12,15 a.m. to go to tactical O.P. with Neilson & Barraclough. Trench with corr[ugated] iron over it. Snow on ground. Worked 2 hr shifts. Back home about 7.30 p.m. Mac came a little later. Pugh back to other position. Shells lobbed around Bty. One in Johnson's old amm. pit yesterday.

Thu 19 (686-143). McCay up again. Phones no good so I had to go half way to meet McCredidin with a phone. Back to O.P. McMahan out on line with Northage. Couldn't get thro;. McC(?) warned again but weather too bad to observe Fritz gave our end of the valley hell all night with Gas, Whizz-bags, 4.2s & 5.9 shells. (Inf. chap in dugout all night.

Fri 20 (687-144). McCay up to register. I had line fixed before he lobbed but phones & telephone wire were no good & sent McM up to Mr Hay with good phone. Few more shells. McM out about 3.30 a.m to mend wire. Fritz put a few shells in Johnon's old pit & smashed line. Guns moved back (& all but the guard also) to old position. Mac, Tom Sey & I walked over. Slept in new dugout. Gas alarm about midnight.

Sat 21 (688-145). Up 7 a.m. To O.P. with Bdr. Thomas & Sgt. George of 45th In sunken road, surrounded by dead Fritzes killed in last raid of theirs. Shells going over. Relieved by Mac & Naughton. Back about 8 p.m.

Sun 22 (689-146). Up about 9 a .m. Fritz barrage around Norieul &

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Lagnicourt. Standing by for visual signalling. Up to (?) Hut O.P. with Dardell & Wilson at 6 p.m. Dugout good now. Walked to forward O.P.s to look round as gas attack & Fritz hop-out was expected. Back again & line broke at 10.30 p.m. Tried to tap into line but eventually went back to old battery position & rung thro'. Cocoa & cake with Duncan & McCormack. Nearly lost & ran into Inf. outpost who halted me (near entanglements). Back to O.P. 1.20 a.m. Aerial activity all day. 3 knocked.

Mon 23 (690-147). Ret. 5.45 a.m. to Bty. Turned in till 9 a.m. & had b'fast. Duncan & McCormack down to report that Mayers, 3rd Div. Gunner, was killed with a piece of shell at 8 a.m. this morning. Position has been towelled up since we left, in fact, all week. Had a bath. Aeroplane over. Our A.A. guns out of amm. so 45th had a shot & McCay (with brown-up) [camouflage?] prepared for ditto. Went to W.L. 4.15 p.m. Had tea there & went to 1870 Monument near Bapaume to see Bob. Lobbed back at pits about 9 p.m. with clean change, 2 letters & a parcel.

Tue 24 (691-148). On phone 5.50 to after b'fast. Beautiful day. Washing Up to B.Q.O. with Bdr. Thompson ½ past 7 p.m. Hun stunt on left about 2.30 a.m. (Wednesday).

Wed 25 (692-149). Home about 9 a.m. Wrote letter. Phone 8 to 10.30 p.m. Too much rum made me spue. Mac lost his teeth. Sausages & cabbage for tea.

Thu 26 (693-150). No b'fast. Phone nearly all day. Parcel & paper. Phone 10.30 p.m. to 1 a.m. Lamp practice after tea. Nice day.

Fri 27 (694-151). Up 7.45 a.m. To B.Q.O. with Corp. Naughton. Dull but fine. Some shelling. Our heavies on Bullecourt & Riencourt also put in time firing Fritz rifles. Back home 98 p.m. Barra & 2 men to new tactical O.P. at 10 p.m.

Sat 28 (695-152). On phone 1 to 3 a.m. Messing round. To B.Q.O. Corp. Naughton 8 p.m. Stokes mortars going just after midnight. 60 Pounder. salvoes..

Sun 29 (696-153). Firing at Fritz aeroplane with rifles. Back 9 a.m. Stunt. McMahan back from O.P. to go with Mr Keys to Brevillers Practice Stunt. Seymour & I to W.L. after tea re same thing. Back to get French lamps, phones, etc. & did not get bed till midnight. Slept. Hand, Ibbs(?)

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Mon 30 (697-154). Up 2 a.m. Rode (past Monument near Bapaume where Bob is) in Cable Wagon to practice stunt.

MAY

Tue 1 (698-155). Lobbed at pits at 3 a.m. Turned in in an old dugout. Teargas about. Up about 10 a.m. Met Grange Eaglesham from M[oonee] Ponds passing our pits about 8 p.m. last night. Had a yarn with him. He told me about Em. Toddy & a few others being married. He is 6th Batt. Carl Ryan is 60th Batt.red.....red.....blue with O.C. to O.P. to register guns. Fritz started to shell valley & S.M. & Bob Hocking were wounded in head (the latter not expected to recover). B subs amm. set afire yet (?) Carse & S.M. did good work in putting it out. (Smithells & Daniels hit just before I went to O.P, just light ones. Concussion knocked their dugout on them & flying bits hit them, face & arm.) Pugh came up & relieved me after dinner. Fritz going on & off all day. & no firing done. Lot Carre (?) badly wounded in both legs by whizz-bang about 6 p.m. Corp. Walker & an officer assisting when another came & smashed officer's leg. (Crawford, 105th How.) Rem.[ainder] of bty & amm. came up. Bed after midnight. Hun shells over. 18 pounder blown out on other side of road to us.

Wed 2 (699-156). Up about 8.30 a.m. O.C. registered guns. Hand, Brown & McCredin up from W.L. Fine weather continues. Few shells over. The Hop-over or F.O.O.s party left after tea & went to sunken road till dusk & then onto front line in front of Reincourt. Landed behind rly bsnk & had to walk on to Rly cutting to 17th Batt. H, 5th Bde.Qrs. Had 1 mile D.3 (metallic) wire, two phones, "E" lamps, 2 flappers (?) Hun plane brought down 7 p.m. in front of O.P. by machine gun. Sitting in trench with Inf. all night. Itermittent shelling. Moonlight till after M.N.

Thu 3 (700-157). Stunt started about ¼ to 4 a.m. & mach. Guns & all burst forth in a hellish chorus. Fritz replying. Moon went down about 3 a.m. & it was quite dark for start of stunt. Infantry reported in Hindenberg Line safely & we expected to follow shortly after, but things got messed up & the waves [of troops] were mixed together & nearly got into our barrage. Fritz knew stunt was coming off & Prussian Guards were waiting . We got knocked back a bit & so we went over in daylight & helped the others (4.40 a.m.) although they were sadly chopped about (on reaching the skyline) with mach. Guns & 5.9s We stayed on all day. At 6 p.m. (?), I & 3 others went home for rations (in packs). Compton & I were nearly to a tank when he put a 77mm [shell] behind us. A piece hit Compton in right forearm. 'Good Blighty.' Bandaged him up & on to dressing station near Vaulx. Took note to O.C. & prepared to return to tell

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F.O.O. to come in when phone message reported them on their way. Went out to meet them. Turned in about 11 p.m. Stunt (?) intro[duction]ved/... red (?) a bit. 6th Bde gained their objective, & we managed to take the first line. Several S.O.S.s during the night. (Harrying parties & S.B.s [Stretcher Bearers] are brave men).

Fri 4 (701-158). Turned out about noon. Had wash & shave. Started on dugout for Me Keys. 3 of us worked till 2 a.m. SAT & others went on till daylight. Shelled on O.P. line after tea.

Sat 5 (702-159). Fritz has had a bad time & we have bombed him back further. To O.P. 2 p.m. to relieve Hand with Mr. Keys. Thundery. Back about 9 p.m. Disturbed by S.O.S.s with No. 6 gun & didn't sleep well.

Sun 6 (703-160). Up 11.30 a.m. Report yesterday morning that Capt. Collins, Lt. Lewis & 2 others hit by aero bomb in Bapaume. 2 former died. On dugout. Up to tactical O.P. in sunken road. Bit of strafing by Fritz. Up all night. Tom Seymour.

Mon 7 (704-161). Cocoa & P[ork] & beans. 2nd Gordon Highlanders hopped over on left at dawn & took **BULLECOURT** after one knock-back. Stretcher & walking cases coming down all night & morning. Some Scotties with them. Fritzes too. Back to battery about 7 a.m. & found that Lt. Dardell had been hit in side by piece of shell (bad wound). Fritz shelling on & off all day. Bdr. Barker, piece in behind., walked to dressing station. Bdr. Newstead came up at midday but got cracked (while taking over) in back of head, rather serious. McM & I mending lines all afternoon under shell-fire. In the end, O.C. & battery 'imshied'. Tapped in on N.M. line (Group) & watched Fritz blow hell out of our gully. Every dugout on edge of ridge blown in by T.S. & mine. Sig. Gear & everything (directions & telescopes & helio) smashed to blazes. Knocked off about 6 p.m. & we slept further along ridge. (Patched up N.M. line at lunchtime.)

Tue 8 (705-162). Drizzly inclined. Nothing doing. Action at 10 p.m. Finish about 10.45 p.m. & went on N.M. line. Bed about 1 a.m. (Rumour: Mr. Dardell died.)

Wed 9 (706-163). Up about 11 a.m. Shave. Up to O.P. after dinner. Shells about. Pete Mountjoy up there. Saw a lot of Huns & Red X wagons. Back about 8 p.m. Thundery-looking.

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Thu 10 (707-164). Up about 11 a.m. Did practically nothing. Haircut .
Rolled part of N.M. (Group) line in. Shower about 8 p.m. Put gear on G.3
wagons & came to Beugnatre W.L. Had sausages & went to bed about 11 p.m.

Fri 11 (708-165). Up about 8 a.m. Rolling wire on reels & squaring
Sigs. gear all day. Walked to Monument but Bob had gone back to bed.

Sat 12 (709-166). Rev. 5 a.m. Boots & S[addles]. Moved off about 8.30
a.m. (Heavy bomb[ardment] at dawn. Hun counter-attack repulsed in front of
BULLECORT. Rode on limber thro' Bapaume. Passed old tanks, etc. to
Pozières. Had some lunch at Y.M.C.A. Laying about all day. Slept out.
Lovely day.

Sun 13 (710-167). Showery first thing. Passed Thousands of graves,
Sausage Vally; mine crater. Rev. 5 a.m. Moved thro' Albert, Franvillers to
Frenchicourt W.L. near old station, 12.30 p.m. Huns taking up track which
used to run to old amm. dump & hospital at (?) Had eggs & sausages
for dinner. Chattie [lice-ridden] billets. Rigged up trench –cover & slept out.
Swam in stream nearby., very cold. Bed 10.30 p.m. Tom S. & Brownie
'shick'. Showery at night.

Mon 14 (711-168). Up 6.30 a.m. Stables. Fix harness racks. Huns at
work 8 hours about: task-work. Knock off when finished. Showery.

Tue 15 (712-169). Fix harness (?) On phones rest of day.

Wed 16 (713-170). Employed man on phones (?)

Thu 17 (714-171). Do. Town Picquet. Champagne &
cigars. Walk., Norman, Sey., Johnson. Bed about 10 p.m. T. Seymour &
others have been drunk nearly every day & night.

Fri 18 (715-172). Phones. Mr. Keys said to see O.C. re cadet school.

Sat 19 (716-173). Rev. 5.30 a.m. Parade 8.30 a.m. Marched to other
side of Behencourt to be inspected by Birdwood at 10.30 a.m. Mobile Vols 3,
6, & 12th leaving 5th Army for while. Back to stables. Clean bikes after dinner.

Sun 20 (717-174). Paint guns. Aerop.[lane] colors: (brown, green, cream,
black lines.) Swim & change. Showery night.

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Mon 21 (718-175). Gear packed on wagons at 8.30 a.m. Moved out shortly after 10 a.m. Put wagons on train in about 1 hr. At lunch-time. Moved off from Albert about 4.30 a.m. (?) through Amiens, Calais, Hazebrouck. Had a shave & tea & a fair sleep. Beautiful scenery.

Tue 22 (719-176). Arrived Bailleuil 6 a.m. Unloaded & on march by 7.15 a.m. Billeted in huts etc. not far from Bailleuil. Stables, etc. Showery all day. Fine at night.

Wed 23 (720-177). Rev. 6.30 a.m. Stables, etc. Spoke to O.C. about cadet school. Bell drunk.

Belgium,

Thu 24 (721-178). As usual. Fix sig. Gear. Had hot bath. & change between Steenwerke Rly Stn & Stw'k. Back thro' La Creche. Gear on G.S. & moved out on limbers, etc. at 7.15 a.m. for good concrete position nr. Ploegstert [8 ml. from Ypres, part of Ypres Salient]. Few shells going over on road nearby about 10.30 p.m. Position near us badly knocked round recently. Bed about 11 p.m. For the last few days, there has been a constant stream of Art'y of all kinds going up the line.

Fri 25 (722-178... mis-numbered). On phone 3 to 5.30 a.m. Turned in again. Fritz set fire to amm. dump (47th). Shell cases hopping all over the ship. Fine sight. Two cases dug into wall of phone pit. One just missed Theo (?) Horne. (Distance between pits measured). Over to Batt. Q. with amm. return. Dump started at 7.15 a.m. & kept going all morning. 5,000 rounds.

Sat 26 (723-179). Phone 3 to 5.30 a.m. To Group with amm. return. Made tables in pit. Bty. in action. Pugh at O.P. Theo, Mack & Pete Mountjoy at O.P. all night.

Sun 27 (724-180). Fritz set 4.5 How[itzer] dump off as Pete, Theo & Mack were returning this morning. Mack & Theo wounded in legs with H.E. Pete got a piece of H.E. in belt. To O.P. 9A in Heath Trench with Mr Barraclough. Shelled after O.C. & Brown left + (?) P.off twice then went to U. 21. O.P. as 77 lobbed on top. Fine view of Fritz wire etc. Had lunch there. Bty. firing on & off all day.. Back about 8.45 p.m. Fritz put some close to phone pit. No. 6 gun up. Gnr. McMahon orderly to group. NOW MARCH ON LEAVE.

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Mon 28 (725-181). Phone 12 mn to about 2.30 a.m. Stunt on. I woke O.C. at 1.30 a.m. Fritz put a lot of stink-pots over as stunt finished & I turned in but awoke at daybreak 3.15 a.m. as he was putting a hell of a lot more gas shells over. McCr. To O.P. Pugh & (?) Juster to H.Q. Exchange at(?)..... Farm. To Group with message. In action. Heavies stirred things up at tea-time. Tom Seymour & Bob Ray(?) up. No. 1 Gun up. Phone 10 p.m. to 12.30 a.m.

Tue 29 (726-182). Messing round. In 5 days, rations up.

Wed 30 (727-183). As usual. T.Group to write out orders re stunt 10 a.m. till dinner-time. Great affair: tanks & all in it. Walk to Ploegstert with note re ammunition. Saw T. Seymour & tried to ride on behind. 18 Pdrs all the way to Ploegsteert. Tramway all along too. [Trenches] U 21 blown in. U. 21. U 22. Lt. Ross 45th wounded & some others. Amm. coming up every night. Phone 11 p.m. to 1 a.m. Water butt came up.

Thu 31 (728-184). Up about 7 a.m. Chosen for hop-over with F.O.O.s Tom Seymour, Muschin, McCredlin & I went with Sigs from 45th & 47th & Tommy Bty. Also, Mr Buzzard & Tommy Lt. Lecture on pigeon carriers & then on model. Strolled round Y.M.C.A. & canteens. Bought "Shell Shocks". Home again at 4 p.m. Phone after tea. Rottenest set of gas shells I've had night & morning.

JUN

Fri 1 (729-185). Over to Group for wire. 77mm. Lobbed on B subs dugout esrly this morning, slightly wounding Corp. Finlayson. As usual all day. Fritz set off a couple of dumps & shelled generally. Juster wounded at D.A. Exchange.

Sat 2 (730-186). Phone 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. To Group to write more orders. Kept messing around till nearly 3 p.m. Just as well as Fritz blew the joint out & set fire to camouflage & amm. dump. O.C., Sgt. Scott, Sgt. Roderick, Bom. Turnbull, McCormack, Meissner. 13 altogether. Phone pit untouched. G.S. wagons came up & we went to wagon lines. Guns followed later. One firing lever damaged. Others only dirty, a couple of spokes burnt.

Sun 3 (731-187). Up about 9 a.m. Messing round all day. Crowd being re-fitted.