

MAY Officers' School London

1918

Sat 18 (1069-145). As usual.

Sun 19 (1070-146). In gun-park. To church at night.

Mon 20 (1071-147). Exam on Gunnery. Also on dir.[ector] & plots, 18 pr.
sights. Redrilling fairly recent.

Tue 21 (1072-148). Map R.[eading] exam paper & country. Goodo.
Oout near Park Lane, Ealing, etc.

Wed 22 (1073-149). Packing & sight testing.

Thu 23 (1074-150). Map reading all day. Saw smoke bomb munitions
girls.

Fri 24 (1075-151). Gun drill. On leave after dinner. Dinner at Frascati's .
Goodo. Slept at Cambridge Gate Cadet Club.

Sat 25 (1076-152). City with Hobson. Dinner with 2 girls of his. Saint
Supposed to be up the river with 2 more but mine didn't turn up. Dine with
Saint at Regent Palace. Back to Club about 10.30 p.m. with Ross.

Sun 26 (1077-153). To St John's Wood at 9.30 a.m. Train left at 2 p.m.
for Fenchurch St. & at about 3 p.m. for Loch Ness. Pretty quiet little place.
Strolled round with Mc Caffrey who is in a room with self, Watson & (?)
Husting. Met a few girls & walked to Thorpe Bay. Back with 2 more.

Mon 27 (1078-154). Driving drill & lectures. Gun drill. Beautiful weather,
but I feel dopy.

Tue 28 (1079-155). As usual.

Wed 29 (1080-156). Bty drill with little wooden wagons. Farcical stunt.
Met the two Townshend girls.

Thu 30 (1081-157). Bty staff drill. Gun drill & lectures.

Fri 31 (1082-158). As usual.

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Sat 1 (1083-159). Down the beach for a swim. Met Doug & some girl friends. Had tea there.

Sun 2 (1084-160). Church parade. I stayed home.

Mon 3 (1085-161). Wrote Dot. As usual

Tue 4 (1086-162). No entry.

Wed 5 (1087-163). " "

Thu 6 (1088-164). " "

Fri 7 (1089-165). " "

Sat 8 (1090-166). Down at hut.

Sun 9 (1091-167). To Strathend, Westcliff, etc. Eat on pier, in tram & back to tea. Wet. So we came back to hut till 10 p.m.

Mon 10 (1092-168). No entry

Tue 11 (1093-169). " "

Wed 12 (1094-170). " "

Thu 13 (1095-171). Out in motor to Rayleigh, etc Bde. Bty. positions. I was Adj.[utant]. Tea at hotel.

Fri 14 (1096-172). ½ h'day for cricket but it rained.

Sat 15 (1097-173). To hut. Dot was there. Rather cold & a trifle showery.

Sun 16 (1098-174). Out to new ranges, Saw new guns & armor plates with shell holes in.

Mon 17 (1099-175). Exam.

Tue 18 (1100-176). Drill order.

Wed 19 (1101-171 misnumbered from here onwards). Exam.

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Thu 20 (1102-172). Written exam

Fri 21 (1103-173). Divis. stunt at Rayleigh with Bty. Open sight exam after. Went down to beach to say Goodbye.

Sat 22 (1104-174). Caught train about 10 a.m. for London. Dinner at (?)Wicklow, then on to Larkhill. Had a few hours in Salisbury & then finished journey at Amesbury. Went out to Camp No. 18 in a Ford car. Living in huts. Very good meals.

Sun 23 (1105-175). Shooting all afternoon. Lecture in morn. (aeroplanes, barrages, etc.) I had 12 rds with a section of guns (on a trench). Easy. Manned guns after shoot. Went to Stonehenge. Service on.

Mon 24 (1106-176). On guns for other crowd (not much work in morning), in afternoon at forward position.

Tue 25 (1107-177). Forward O.P. & finished our shoot. A few rd.s with open sights. After lunch, lecturettes & lecture by R.F.C. [Royal Flying Corps] officer. Missed top of squad by 1 mark. Good concert in evening. Majors & all very merry.

Wed 26 (1108-178-1**first day as 2ND LIEUTENANT**). Up about 6 a.m. & marched to Amesbury 3½ miles. Caught train to (?) Poston. Saw Dickie Lee (----- ?-----) at Parkhouse). Got another train & changed at Basingstoke. Arr. London at 1.30 p.m. To H'ferry & got stars, etc. Shopping with ----- ?----- Gear from W'low & stayed at Ivanhoe.

Thu 27 (1109-179-2). As usual. Shopping at Alex Burrows at H'bury Rd. Went to Dean Hotel to see other crowd & had dinner & a few drinks.

Fri 28 (1110-180-3). Caught the 3 p.m. to Cardiff with Mat Moylan. Stayed night at Rly Central Hotel. Saw exhibition of work done by limbless soldiers. Saw (?) Rowash Park.

Sat 29 **(1110 (misnumbered) -4)**. Caught train at 12.15 p.m. for Ponty.pridd]. Florrie came back from Salop after tea. Miah (?) brushed his (?) talunel.

JUN Leave

1918

Sun 30 (1111-5). Strolled round & talked.

JUL

Mon 1 (1112-6). Usual.

Tue 2 (1113-7). Up to golf links & met Jo & Miss H.

Wed 3 (1114-8). To Mr. (?) Matson Jones' office & he took us for a walk to Phillips Colliery & Mills St. Higher Elementary School. Kiddies from 12 to about 16. Fine idea of home training for girls: Laundry-work, Type of kitchen-sitting room & bed-room. Hot showers. Youngsters at all schools have eyes & teeth examined. Up the Rhonda to Tonypandy. Lalurynpia Porth. Dusty & very thinly populated. Back to tea & the girls were there. Saw them to station.

Thu 4 (1115-9). 10.14 a.m. to C'diff. Strolled round with M & F & then crossed to Weston Super Mare on the 12.10 p.m. boat. Had lunch at the (?) Kalif & then went for a drive. Somerset is very pretty. Plenty of apple trees. Tried some cider. Not bad. Boat at 6.10 & am in C'diff one hour later. Tide goes out a long way. Long new unused pier there. Fine front. Plenty of mud when tide is out. Had tea in C'diff at the (?) Lorries & thyen left for Padd.[ington by 10.40 p.m.

Fri 5 (1116-10). Arr. Padd. 3.30 a.m. Dug out a hotel paper & got a bed for the rest of the night nr. Paddington. B'fast over about 9.30 & then went to Ivanhoe. Shopping & then out to (?) Cayley to see M. Had tea with her & saw the kiddies. Most interesting. In to town & had tea at Frascati's, then out to Fenchurch St. Home about 11 p.m.

Sat 6 (1117-11). Shopping. Met Alex Burrows & son & went to Simpson's for dinner & messed round. Saw the Royal Family about 1.40 p.m. at Pic. Circus on their way to Silver wedding ceremony at St.Paul's.

Sun 7 (1118-12). Wrote letters. Good dinner at (?) Fleming's -----.
Out to Streatham. Rather nice. Caught late tube at Ele.[phant] & Castle & got home about 12.15 a.m.

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Mon 8 (1119-13). To H'ferry at 10 a.m. was told to report at Padd. at 5.15 p.m. Dinner at (?) Monaco, Pic. Line. Sent arty brooch to Mother, £2/2/-. Caught train at Padd. Change at Westbury & arr. at Warminster about 8.30 p.m. Motor to camp & was put into a hut at No. 4 Batt. Good meals. Saw Bill Shea.

Tue 9 (1120-14). Rev. 6 a.m. B'fast about 7.40 a.m. Fell in 8.30 a.m. Messed round till 10.30 a.m. Q.M.S. stores.

Wed 10 (1121-15). As yesterday. Hand in gear. Jerks. Wet.

Thu 11 (1122-16). Lectures. Gun instr. & few fired. Wet.

Fri 12 (1123-17). As usual. Concert party.

Sat 13 (1124-18). ½ day. Changed over to W.A. Officers' Camp No. 14. Walked to Warmunster with McLarty. Met Fry in Com. Bank. Tea at home.

Sun 14 (1125-19). Wet. Messed round.

Mon 15 (1126-20). Orders to leave tomorrow. Blind concert at night. (Goodo). Party had supper with us. Leister, Madden Brown, Logan Gourley, Holland, Dorothy (?) Lapon.

Tue 16 (1127-21). Car to W'minster. Train to Sth. Hampton, 4.51 a.m. Arr. about 1 p.m. Dinner at Big Hotel. Good. Gear on board & strolled round town. Also tram ride. (On board about 7 p.m.) Load of tanks. Good men, 12 months or more training in (?) Mexico. Latin 10/-. Hot bath.

France

Wed 17 (1128-22). Arr. Havre about 3 a.m. Ashore about 8 a.m. Tram to Harfleur No. 12 camp. Reported & then had leave till 11 p.m. Dance on. Went for stroll to Montvilliers & back thro' Harfleur in car. Saw Eric Schofield, McDonald & Parkinson.

Thu 18 (1129-23). Up 6.30 a.m. To gas school, ¼ to 8, 1 mile away. Lach.[rimonal], Mustard & Phos.[gene]. Back at 11.30 p.m. then free till 1 p.m. Train to Havre at 3 p.m. Stroll on beach & tea in town.

JUL France

1918

Fri 19 (1130-24). Censor letters. To Havre with Wilson & McLarty. Had liqueurs & tea & dinner. Mc went to a joint. Back home in a car (?) Tortoni. (?) Lovely ride.

Sat 20 (1131-25). Orderly Officer. All crowd leaving. Some with drafts. Wet day. (?), Odd & I & some others left in motor bus at 8.30 p.m. Train supposed to leave at 9 p.m.

Sun 21 (1132-26). Train left about 1.30 a.m. n Arr. Rouen about 6.30 a.m. Had the day in Rouen. Train left about 5 p.m. Arr. Etaples about 4 a.m. Thro' Calais & St. Omer about 12 midday. Had dinner.

Mon 22 (1133-27). Went out to Tilques about 5 p.m. Reinforcement Camp & Art'y School, 2nd Army. Sleep in tents.

Tue 23 (1134-28). Very wet. Censor letters. Kits to be ready to move at 1.45 p.m. Lorry didn't turn up so we went to R.A. school's mess for dinner (guests' night). Foster & Dodermede. (Very decent). Turned into our tents again.

Wed 24 (1135-29). Censor letters. Lorry about 2 p.m. took us to St. Omer. Train at 4 p.m. to (?) Eblinghien where we met JimStachan going on leave & Fred Dahlson to Aussie.. Rode to B.H.Q Wagon Lines on their horses & then went to B.A.C.s. Stayed the night with Johnny Hay. Fritz over at night.

Thu 25 (1136-30). Strolled round. Alf (?) Eades 45th. To B.H.Q. to see Col. Lloyd & Maj. Campbell. I was detailed to 47th, Moylan to 46th. Back to B.A.C. & stayed the night.

Fri 26 (1137-31). To 47th [Bty] about 10 a.m. Rained heavily. Had a look at horses & wagons, etc. Capt. Callinan came down & took me up with him via L. Lines. Cowderry & Edwards, Lt.s, decent chaps.

JUL **France**

1918

Sat 27 (1138-32). Getting into the way of things. Went to 112.

Sun 28 (1139-33). Insp'n & presentation of medals near W.L. by Birdwood.

Mon 29 (1140-34). Ord. Off. last night & today. Fixed up a ----- (?) stock with Cowderry. To O.P. with (?), Waldron & was shown country by Capt. Callinan. Had a section of 112 guns onto a hedge (?) for about 40 rd.s Help for OX Rocket Post & O.P. exchange about 8 p.m. In an old house. Had dinner with Edwards at Tank gun close by. 2 Spooks & Corp'l.

Tue 30 (1141-35). Stunt for Morris started at 12.15 a.m. Diggers cut it off. They took it without Art'y a week ago, but were told not to hold it. (H.Q. borlz.) Fine sight & most successful. Home about 7.30 a.m. Up around midday. Messing round.

Wed 31 (1142-36). As usual. Insp'n by C.O. & Capt. Bean (War Corresp.) Up to O.P. with Cameron of 112th Bde. to register a How.[itzer]. Had dinner there. Home about 8 .15 a.m. O.P. last night & today. Gun moved to another posy.

AUG

Thu 1 (1143-37). As usual. X'n of Tommy Art'y came in to relieve us. 6 letters read.

Fri 2 (1144-38). Up 4.30 a.m. To O.P. 6 a.m. watching line all day. Relief to be completed by Tommies by 9 p.m. Miserable day at O.P. Relieved at 8 p.m. & walked to OX for horse. Rode to pits & met Edwards & then had a rotten ride to old W.L. & then all over the shop to (?) Leynde.

Sat 3 (1145-39). Arr. Leynde about 1 a.m. Had supper & turned in in a tent on the grass. Rather wet. Up about 9.30 a.m. Messing round in lines. Rode to St. Omer for gear but clothing store had gone. Felt crook.

Sun 4 (1146-40). Up about 11 a.m. Went to church parade. (Anniv. of War.)

AUG France

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Mon 5 (1147-41). Up 4.30 a.m. Ord. Off. Moved at 8.30 a.m. I stayed to clean up camp. & followed at 9.30 a.m. Entrained at St. Omer. Dinner at club. Arr. Longpre on Somme at 11 p.m. Rotten job detraining.

Tue 6 (1148-42). Pushed on about 16 K. to (?) Argoeuvres (there with 2nd Div. last Oct 12mths) about 7 a.m. B'fast & turned in, in a billet. Moved out at 9.30 p.m.

Wed 7 (1149-43). Passed Amiens. Plenty of searchlights to Bussy. Rotten march (15 K.) at rear. G.S. bogged. Arr. Bussy about 4 a.m. Turned in. Up about 11 a.m. Went to pits near Fouilloy near Corbie, 4 p.m. Tanks & troops everywhere (?) Fixing up carriage & went to L.[eft] gun, in open, about 9.30 p.m.

Thu 8 (1150-44). Stunt started 4.20 a.m. I had L. X'n. Most successful. Prisoners & traffic on all roads. (Carl Ryan* buried here.) Finished at 8.30 a.m. & lay off. Bed about 8 p.m.

Fri 9 (1151-45). Up about 7 a.m. Moved off thro' (?) Warfuall Abancourt to W.L. in a gully in old Fritz country. To a position between Moricourt & Bayonvilliers Lizant Wood. (?) Reset position. Just ready when orders came to move & off we went to W.L. then into another place to the left of last. Stunt on left seems to have been successful in straightening line. 2 Fritz planes down & one of our balloons. Amm. up. I'm R.O.

Sat 10 (1152-46). Up about 8 a.m. Rt. X'n straffed a 77[mm] bty. Then an L.L. call Messed round till 5 p.m. then I was sent to (?) S Ū [support trench] 23 Q to find Capt. at new position. Saw Fritz 5.9 bty.s also 4.2 being fired (?) missing Diggers in gully. Eventually, found position in Hope Wood Q 29 b 8. 9.3. but Capt. had gone & I went back to (?) rest bty. Back to Hope Wood picked up A.P. & laid out line of fire. Stunt coming off: Infantry, Cavalry & armoured cars.

***Carl Ryan, an old friend (cricketer & Methodist choir member) from Moonee Ponds, Melbourne, referred to in Harold's last letter, dated 12th August 1918.**

AUG France

1918

Sun 11 (1153-48). S.O.S. about 4 a.m. Lots of straffing going on. Stunt not a success. Rec.[onnoitre] a new position as we are too close up. Right against supports. 1 man wounded about 3.30 p.m. Lots of bombs last night & this morning. 112th Bde. W.L. hit. 1 man, 2 horses killed. After lunch, Col. came & took me to find a new position. New pos. 500yds L. rear of old place. To left of 46th Bty. on edge of gully. Fired ½ hr. stunt at 9.30 p.m. Made rough d'out Fritz shelled gas too & bombed.

Mon 12 (1154-49). Up 9.30. "Rough stunts" all day. Looking at HUN 5.9s & 4.2s. Hot weather.

[This was Harold's last diary entry. He wrote his last letter to his parents and brother Frank on 12 August 1918. He was gassed on the evening of 15/16 August 1918. On 18 August, Harold was admitted to 51st Field Ambulance CCS, "dangerously ill." Suffering from "gas poisoning", he was transferred to No. 8 General Hospital, B.E.F. in Rouen, where he died on 19 August 1918.]