

ROBERT (Bob) OSWALD SNAPE

Reg. No. 8651, Private, 8th Reinforcements, 6th Field Ambulance, A.I.F.

(Enlisted: 15th July 1915). Something in the diary line. Not expected to last very long*.

(Transcribed from handwritten manuscript by grandson, Walter Barber).

Thursday 15th July 1915.

Had to report to the Sturt Street Barracks (Melbourne) at 2 p.m. After waiting there for about ten minutes I was given a warrant for Seymour & told to catch the 2-40 p.m. train. There was only one other fellow being sent to Seymour that day & he accompanied me to Spencer Street railway station. He was a "wild & woolly" sort of individual, from Bendigo, & as he hadn't a penny in his pocket, I opened my heart & paid his tram fare. At the station, we were supplied with passes in exchange for the warrant & I was fortunate enough to get into a compartment with several soldiers who had been in town on leave. During the journey, one chap produced a huge bag of cakes, which he generously handed around.

The train arrived at Seymour (approx. 60 miles/100 Km from Melbourne) at about half past five after a rather monotonous journey. Save for the few shops the place seems right in the heart of the bush: plenty of trees, & hills all round. There were vehicles of all descriptions waiting to take us out to the Camp: charge 1/- (one shilling) each way & we selected a motorcar. I barracked the driver that we couldn't overtake the Ford car which was on ahead (ours was a Delaunay Belleville). An exciting race ensued which ended by us leaving the Ford out of sight. The mud was at least a foot thick in many places on the road & the cars skidded all over the shop. It was a most enjoyable ride to the Camp. The road is lined with trees nearly all the way out & the general appearance of the country is very much prettier than I had imagined. On arrival at the Camp, they kept me hanging around for nearly 3 hours (till 8 p.m. or later) before putting me into a tent in The Army Medical Corps, but this was the merest of mere details where the military authorities are concerned. While waiting to be paraded before one of the majors, I took the opportunity of looking around part of the Camp. It is a city in itself. It's like a big native village & has about a dozen tent shops. I "essayed" a hot pie at one of these as it seemed to be the only hot thing obtainable. It was too much for me. I had to throw half of it away after taking a few mouthfuls _ I never was good at "pies." I then tackled a glass of ginger ale with better results. These shops are most amusing. They consist of a number of boxes piled on top of each other and filled with every conceivable article. While I was in the grocer's shop, a chap bought a bottle of Greathead's Mixture and another tried unsuccessfully to cash a couple of postal notes. It was quite dark by now & I had to walk about like a cat on hot bricks for fear of tumbling over the network of drains and tent pegs. There was scarcely any mud around here.

The Army Medical Corps is on the opposite side of the road to the Infantry lines & is about 500 yards nearer to the Seymour station. There are only about 40 tents in the Army Medical, in addition to the officers' & doctors' tents & six tents comprising the Clearing Hospital. The tent I went into was already occupied by seven other fellows. They are supposed to accommodate 12 men. The others were just going to bed when I turned up. They said I would probably get no sleep at all the first night in the tent

*(Transcribed from handwritten manuscript by grandson, Walter Barber).

but I am pleased to say that I slept very well all night, in spite of the fact that I hadn't even a mattress - only a thin waterproof sheet & a couple of blankets.

Friday, July 16th, 1915

The strangest part of all was getting up at 6-30 in the morning, , collecting clothes from off the ground & dressing by candle light. I had used my coat & vest for a pillow (pillows being a luxury not provided at Camp) & needless to say they presented a sorry appearance in the morning. But appearance seems to count for nothing up here.

Immediately on dressing, we all had to fall into line while the roll was called. It did seem funny to be lined up like that in the dark. After roll call we were split into different parties & allocated various tasks. I was told off to dig drains with pick & shovel, along with several other fellows. You ought to have seen the magnificent performance we put up - 'Government stroke' was nothing to us. One wag said he always made it a rule to count ten between each stroke he made with the pick. This job finished, we all had to fall in again & do a bit of drilling. We went about four miles altogether - across country and along roads. The march was just the thing. I was struck by the large number of magpies & crows about. We got back from our march about 12 o'clock & the bugle went for dinner. Oh! But I forgot to describe the breakfast. What a repast it was. Boiled beef in big hunks! One man from each tent takes a large shallow dish around to the cook, when the cookhouse bugle sounds, & is given one of these hunks of meat. Another man takes round a bucket in which he gets a queer concoction which they dignify with the name coffee. If there is any bread or jam left from the night before, it is fished out also. This is "breakfast."

Dinner consists of a dish of stew, tea without milk. The men taking the buckets & dishes around to the cook have to tell him how many men there are in their respective tents & the supply is gauged accordingly.

The stuff, I found, was well-cooked. We are supplied with a tin plate & cup each. However, the fellows in our tent had purchased about a dozen knives & forks & several enamel plates so we do things in style. I made a good meal both at breakfast & dinnertime. This seems rather strange seeing that one of my tent mates said he ate nothing for three days when he first came into Camp, while another made miserable meals for at least three weeks. I can only put it down to the fact that I had known previously exactly what the conditions would & had thought the whole matter over carefully before enlisting. And yet I used to be so fussy about my meals when at home. After dinner I'm blest if I can remember what I did but I know that we were supplied with tea, a loaf of bread, a tin of jam & a candle at tea time.

Of course I know all my tent-mates by now - well anyhow I think I know all but one - he is a wowsery - morose sort of creature. (I found out later that he wishes he hadn't enlisted - hence the moroseness.) One chap & I went over to the Infantry lines after tea. There are about six large tents over there which are run by the various religious denominations. They are fitted up with seats & tables & each contains a piano (more or less playable). Some of them even contain writing materials which are supplied gratuitously. (I think that word is spelt rightly but I'm doubtful. I put half a crown on it anyway.)

We listened for a while to a sort of concert in the Y.M.C.A. tent. I recognised Mr McDonald (Nyora, VIC.) on the platform. He is up here assisting the man in charge of the tent. He will be here for three weeks. After watching a boxing contest at the Stadium for about ten minutes we wandered round & made sundry purchases at the stores & then went back to our tent. We had "High Jinks" in our tent that night. Two of the fellows had been in to Seymour & they came home drunk. Dishes & things were pitched all round the tent. After a lively but

most enjoyable? half hour, one fellow went so mad that he made a rush at the tentpole & pulled it down. I made one dive for the pole & managed to rescue it just in time to save the whole tent from collapsing. To my embarrassment, the others seemed to look upon my action as bordering on the "heroic" & one of them said "Bob, that settles it. We're never going to let you go out of our tent." We managed then to get the other two revellers to bed, although one of them would persist in talking that "man-on-the-corner-of the-street-with-a-stand-selling-studs" sort of stuff, for about twenty minutes after. I didn't sleep so well that night.

Letter: 16th July 1915

[Church of England Soldiers' Institute (Home Mission) Seymour]

Dear Mother,

Arrived here safely last night. The Camp here is much better than I expected. Am writing this in the Corps tent. Was sorry to find that the post closed at 7 p.m. & I have only a few mins to write as I wanted to write a longer letter.

I slept very well last night & like the food.

Will write a longer letter.

With love

Bob.

P.S

I saw Fritz Hosking this morning. I was working with a shovel & he called out not to work too hard. I expect Father would have liked to have been there to see me.

I've got in with a pretty decent crowd in the tent. We had bully beef for breakfast. (I ate it.) Stew for dinner (I ate it.) & bread & jam for tea (I ate it also)

Saturday 17th July 1915

I was awakened about half an hour before the bugle went by the sound of rain beating on the tent. It was still raining when we turned out. It seemed absurd the way we all stood there in the rain. However, it cleared off while the roll was being called. After breakfast, I was put on the stretcher squad that had to assist in carrying the sick from the wards into the ambulance to be sent down to Melbourne by train. Later in the morning we fell in again & I was told off with a dozen others to take down a marquee at the Army Service Corps grounds & re-erect it on the Seymour Racecourse. The Army Medical had arranged a football match & the Governor General was coming up in the afternoon. We had arranged to provide his party with refreshments.

We got Saturday afternoon off & I spent it writing letters & reading. There is a piano in the officers' mess tent in the Army Medical & we spent the evening here. One of my tent mates let the cat out that I could play so I was pretty much occupied accompanying for songs etc, during the evening. In the middle of one song, an officer came in & said he wanted two men to go to town in the ambulance to hold down a man who had the 'DTs' (Delirium tremens) but I was fortunate in not being selected. They had to give him an injection to keep him quiet & had him tied down to a stretcher.

Our letters are handed out in the ranks about midday. They call the names & you have to step out & get them.

Sunday 18th July 1915

Didn't have to fall out till 6-45 this morning. It was raining again. We were all told off to pick up any papers that were in the lines. It's hard to find any because the men don't throw much rubbish about seeing that they only have to pick it up again the next day. About 9-45a.m. we fell in & marched down to the Infantry lines for Church Parade. This was held standing in the open air & was a sort of mixture of a Presbyterian & Church of England service. Archdeacon Hindley gave an address & the rain came down as soon as he began to speak so one of the Chaplains had to hold an umbrella over his head.

After church, we had the rest of the day free (as I thought) but I was informed during the afternoon that it was my turn of hospital night duty & that I would have to go on duty at 7 p.m. till 7 a.m. Monday morning. Hospital duty at night is rather a weird game. The hospital is crowded at present with nearly 100 patients. One other man & I had ten patients (we had charge of B ward) and two more patients arrived during the night. We had to stay up all night & attend to these men but will get the whole day off from 7 a.m. Monday.

Monday 19th July 1915

When on hospital duty we had to look after the patients, give them their medicine at the hours subscribed, & take their temperatures, pulses & respirations every four hours. At about 1 a.m., we gave them each a cup of coffee, 3 a.m. medicine & 4 a.m. we washed their hands & faces. Of course if any are asleep, we don't wake them but it was such a rough night on Monday that none of them could sleep much. About half past five, I stepped around to our tent, lit a candle & got myself some bread & jam, as I was feeling somewhat on the hungry side. At 7 a.m. I went & got a few hours sleep.

After lunch, about 20 of us committed the terrible offence of going outside the gate to see some new recruits marching past from the station to the Depot. We were all lined up before Captain Grover & those who hadn't been on night duty were 'crimed' & will in due course be fined. I'm staring well. I was paraded before Major McGuirein connection with my application for office duties. He asked me what I could do etc, etc. & informed me that he would apply for my transfer to the office. So I expect to be put on clerical work in a few days. The men say that clerks have a much better chance of getting leave than the ordinary privates. I forgot to mention that the wowsery individual left our tent the morning after they nearly pulled it down. He said he wouldn't stand for that sort of thing. One chap said that if he'd known that would have shifted him, he would have pulled the tentpole down weeks ago.

One of the corporals here is most amusing. The following are two of his little speeches:- At football match,

"Is there hany o' you chaps of the Harmy Medical what wants a horange?"

and,

“Wake up youse men. The bugle’s blew long ago.”

Tuesday, July 20th 1915

It’s wonderful the variety of men we have up here & the variety of ways they have of looking at Camp life. While marching this morning, the fellow on my right (a clerk from Moonee Ponds) did nothing but growl, while the chap on my left made the following interesting remark, “Do you know what - I reckon us chaps are tourists--- tourists going around the country and getting paid for it” it struck me as being rather a novel way of looking at it; but then the fellow himself is the quaintest of persons. His name is Charlie Mc K-----& he’s from the country. He often bursts into song in the ranks. To his own sorrow. Then we have a policeman, not far off 7 feet in height: to see this chap march serenely along with a piece of paper about 2 inches square in his hand (cleaning up the lines) is most amusing. He is not at all reticent now he’s left the force. He told me round the cook’s fire tonight, that a burglar once ran right into his very arms. He offered our policeman all he had in his pockets 20 golden sovereigns if he would let him go & our policeman pocketed the sovereigns & released him. One night in Bourke Street, he saw a man cut a hole in a jeweller’s window & crawl through. Our John waited for him to come out again. As the man got back through the hole, laden with watches, etc., he grabbed him. He says he got two watches out of the affair. One the burglar dropped & one afterwards forwarded to him by the jewellers. He says that when a Policeman plays up on duty, he is put on Princes Bridge. He was put on there himself a little while ago because a sergeant caught him with a pot of beer in his hand, whilst on duty.

In our tent alone we have a baker, who now acts as cook’s assistant, another chap

who’s been a jockey, coach driver & undertaker (he says he can bury a man with the best of them - in fact give him a real flash turnout). One chap’s an iron machinist, another’s a country accountant & another’s off a boat. When they all start telling their experiences some queer things come to light & are needless to say swallowed by myself with the proverbial grain of salt.

Wednesday July 21st 1915

The mountain (or high hill) on our left is as usual, hidden by dense white clouds this morning. After breakfast, we went for a route march to the Goulburn River at Trawool. It was a delightful march. The scenery is very fine.

Thursday July 22nd 1915

Had solid stretcher drill all the morning. We practise this exactly as it will have to be done at the front and have the actual stretchers in our hands. We divide into stretcher squads & there are six men in each squad, to take turn about when the stretcher has to be carried long distances. I have to keep my wits about me when we have this drill because we always start off with the command, Tallest on the right, shortest on the left. Size!” & I very often find myself at the head of the line. I don’t care a hang, except when the Major’s commanding us & then one has to be pretty wide awake. Mac. comes back. This evening we were all surprised to see McP---- race into the tent. He had been absent for a whole week without leave. Mac’s absolutely the coolest individual I ever struck. He expects to be fined about 30/- (one pound ten shillings) & perhaps c.b. (confined to barracks) for this as he has been

marked absent for so many days. He says he's not one of the worrying sort & will think out some excuse during the night.

In the afternoon I was asked by one of the officers to play some accompaniments so spent two or three hours at the piano in the officers' mess tent. Lizzie hangs up alongside the piano and grins at you all the time. Lizzie is a human skeleton – but after a few minutes, you get quite used to it. We spent most of the evening in the Y.M.C.A. tent. The favourite song up here seems to be “You made me love you” and “You're my baby.” I had to fake accompaniments for several songs I had never heard & in one case had the agonising experience of playing for an ass who sang one verse in about six different keys.

Friday July 23rd 1915

This morning Mac & I had the job of taking some straw out of two hospital tents & burning it. I've met some tired fellows but never one to come near Mac. We took all the morning over a job that could have been done in half an hour. He says he likes making his jobs spin out.

One of the men in our tent, Harry L—has the job of attending to the lamps so we never run short of candles & sometimes even have the luxury of a hurricane lamp in the tent at night. Harry & I went into Seymour by motorcar on Wed. night. We dispensed with the formality of passes & slipped through the fence. After putting in

an hour at the picture show, he decided to spend the night at the house of his sister-in-law in Seymour & I came home alone. When I was a few yards along the road home, it suddenly dawned upon me that I was sitting in the car alongside one of the officers of the AMC.—As I was out without a leave pass, I decided to bluff it out & trust to luck of not being seen in the dark & instead of getting out at the AMCI went straight on to the Depot & then doubled back on foot.

At breakfast time on Thurs. morning, Harry had still not returned & I heard the Corporal in Charge yelling out wanting to know why the two lights on the mast hadn't been put out & the Red Cross flag & Union Jack hoisted. To save Harry from getting into a row, I decided to slip down to the mast & have a shot at the job myself. After juggling with the thing for about twenty minutes I managed to get the lights down & the flags up.

On Friday night, a fellow in the Infantry cut his throat & was immediately rushed into the Clearing Hospital. I was sorry I wasn't on duty at the time, to admit him, as I am anxious to get experience of this kind. They sewed his throat up again & he's getting over it. That's the worst of those recruiting campaigns. they get unstable fellows to enlist in the excitement & when they get into Camp, they repent & do all sorts of rash things.

Mac told us about a man who worked on a guillotine opposite him in an engineering shop. One day, the guillotine cut one of his fingers clean off. It was done so quickly that he never felt it at the time & stood staring at his hand in such a silly way that Mac, who had been looking on, burst out laughing. Mac then picked up the finger, put it in a bottle & presented it to him.

Saturday July 24th 1915

We had the hardest morning drill since I came here. Several men were being examined to be made corporals & Major McGuire had us marching & drilling all over the place about quarter past seven before we'd even had a chance to get any breakfast. We heard today that he has been transferred & Major Norton is taking his place.

At 10-45, we made a hurried dinner & marched into Seymour. A military carnival was held in the Show Grounds. It was the biggest affair that had taken place since the Camp had been here. The town was decorated & all Seymour & district were in the streets to see us march through. We took four stretchers in front of our crowd & I had the labour of assisting to carry one. When we got to the Show Grounds, we had stretcher drill in real earnest. About ten fellows had found the march too much for them & some fainted & others took sick in other ways & had to be carted inot the ambulance on stretchers. I didn't have to do any of the actual lugging about, but got orders to run to the Post Office & ring for another motor ambulance. About 1-30 p.m., we were dismissed & Mac, Harry & I wandered about the town & Show Grounds till about 4 p.m. Today I am experiencing the delightful sensation of being stony broke; otherwise "on the rocks." After paying my 1/- car fare back from Seymour, I hadn't a solitary penny. There is a branch of the Commonwealth Bank

here so I must arrange to have my book sent up, because we don't get any pay till the first of the month. I fancy I took about 30/- up with me. Where it's all got to, Goodness knows!

I am on all night ward duty again tonight. I've struck B Ward duty again & we have nine patients & rather troublesome ones they are too. It's grand the way most of them bear the pain through & we feel that we don't mind what we have to do for them. But it seems rather solid to have to dance attendance on one man we have here tonight. He was picked up in the road & is so hopelessly intoxicated that we had to take him into the hospital. The doctor who examined him told us to put hot water bottles round him & we have to keep on refilling these. My co-warder is snatching a few minutes sleep on one of the spare beds & I have just finished putting fresh hot water in the bottles for the above-mentioned patient. I had to place three around his body. So far he has been lying like a stone but we have the cheerful prospect of all sorts of trouble when he begins to come round. Of course, don't think we take every drunken soldier into the hospital. This joker has made an exceptional beast of himself.

Three of the patients were yelling out that they were starving a little while ago. The doctor had refused to give them anything until morning but as they were only suffering from influenza I couldn't stand it so sneaked out into our tent & came back with some bread & jam. The three inf. patients grabbed a piece each with joy & when I asked id anyone wanted the remaining piece, the man in No.5 bed said he had not had anything for about three days so I gave it to him. On looking up the charts later, however, I was horrified to find that No. 5's case had been diagnosed by a docotr as appendicitis-----and I had given him bread & jam! There's no mistake, Id some brainy things sometimes. I must admit that I got wild with the fellow in No. 10 bed though. He is a sergeant, a man about 35 I would say & imagined that we had promised to get him a meat pie. I said that if he wanted something to eat very badly I would get him some bread & jam from my own tent. He said he "wasn't used to bread & jam" & couldn't eat it; so I called him something pretty strong & left him in disgust.

The aboriginal patients in the hospital seem to delight in telling you all about their family affairs. An epileptic patient has just finished giving me a full account of everything that's happened to himself, wife & child during the last five or six years. It's beastly interesting I don't think. We have to take all the temperatures at 5 a.m. tomorrow morning & some chump has broken the thermometer for B ward so I shall have to get a loan of one from another tent. We have to walk about a hundred yards with a bucket to get hot water. A fellow has to stay up all night keeping an open air copper going.

Sunday July 25th 1915

I was lucky enough to get 2 hours of sleep early this morning in the ward. The other chap has been asleep for about 3 hours now. I haven't disturbed him because there is only sufficient work for one at this hour of the morning (4-30). There would be a nice old row if we both fell asleep together as there is an orderly corporal whose business it is to pay periodical visits to the wards.

Was not relieved till 7-30 a.m., the other two fellows arriving half an hour late. This is the first time I have been unable to eat the food provided. I couldn't touch the meat. I'm sure there was something radically wrong with it.

I had two or three hours sleep during the morning & after dinner Father & Mother arrived on the scene. Was very pleased to see them & after showing them round the Camp we went into town together. They caught the 5-15 train back to Melbourne & I was lucky enough to get a free ride back to Camp in one of the motor ambulances.

Monday, July 26th 1915

The sunrise this morning was the most beautiful I have ever seen. (I've only witnessed one before in my life). The sun has been hidden by mist & clouds every other morning since I have been in Camp.

I was told off, with five others, to assist the man they call "the washerwoman." We had such fun! He taught me to wash pillow slips & in the afternoon I washed a few towels.

I have done things up here that I never dreamt I would have to do. However, I manage to keep my end up by telling myself that I'm working for the country. Anyhow, when a man enlists he must be prepared to do anything & go anywhere.

After tea, myself & three others walked into Seymour & had a gay time, returning about midnight. We kicked up such a row getting back into our tent that the sergeant in charge got up out of bed & cautioned us. I can see our tent getting court-martialled yet. We were two hours & a half on the road walking back, with fried fish in one hand & chips in the other. We all leaned against a fence near the butcher's shop & it collapsed. We bolted.

I took about five snapshots during the afternoon but don't know how they will turn out.

Tuesday, July 27th 1915

We pulled our tent down after breakfast so as to let the ground dry thoroughly

I had to work hard today. Three or four hospital tents had to be pulled down & re-erected on

another spot. New trenches had to be dug around the tents & the old ones filled in. The ground was almost as hard as rock in some places. All the tents & contents had to be sprayed.

Have been put on all night duty again tonight (D ward). They have been rushing the patients in wholesale. We can't get a single one more in our ward. All the beds are full & we have two on the ground in stretchers. It is a lovely night & I have been up to the cook's fire, making myself something to drink. This is a large open air log-fire & I sat alongside it for about twenty minutes. It brought back memories of that night

at W -----when we all sat round
-----listened to the singing.
-----stumps alight all round
-----re preparing the
-----re tents

[The last page of the original has been partially torn out.]

Mon 2nd Aug. 1915

Caught the 6-32 a.m. from Essendon (Melbourne, family's home suburb) & arrived back at Camp about 9-30 a.m. I busied myself during the morning collecting chips keeping our Pompey (an old kerosene tin with holes punched in it alight in the tent to dry the ground. It had rained heavily during the weekend.

A couple of batches of new recruits arrived today. They generally get here about dinner time & we all rush down to the gate to see them march past on their way to the Depot.

I am on night duty (9 p.m. to 9 a.m.) this evening & it has been raining full-sized dogs & cats with a bit of lightning thrown in.

I spent a couple of hours from 6-30 till 8-30) in the YMCA tent. The various notices posted up in the tents are most amusing. I intend to compile a list of them one day. Here are a few examples:

YMCA..... "Rags & dances are barred on Sundays"
Salvation Army..... "Wine is a mocker"
YMCA coffee stand..... "We have lost a lot of mugs. Where are they?"

Then, there is the C of E coffee stall. Just fancy, the noble C of E, handing out hot pies & coffee. I could hardly believe my eyes when I first saw it.

The night hospital duty scheme has been changed from 7 till 7 to 10 till 10. However, the wards are all full up & another chap & I had to commence work at 9 p.m. to fix up the sergeants' mess tent as a temporary hospital. We had to fill palliasses with straw & lay patients on the ground. It's a nice old mix up I can tell you. We've got 14 men packed like

sardines in the tent & one has to move about like a cat on hot bricks to avoid stepping on them. You ought to have seen the mud on the road tonight. We had to wade through a small river to get back from the A.M.C. from the Depot.....

Editor's note: There is nothing further about life in Camp, or on the home front, though Bob meets Madge (Margaret Mc Lachlan) and they marry secretly before he leaves on Active Service.

**No. 3
At Sea
29th December 1915**

Dear All,

We went on board the boat about 11-30 & left the town pier at 1-30 p.m. I hope you got my letter card all right; also the postcard of the ship. The A.M.C. have splendid quarters, although we are near the stern of the ship we are practically on deck & have plenty of ventilation. Most of the Infantry are down below decks. We anchored just off Williamstown. The meals we have had so far have been pretty good. The fellows are as excited as school boys-----climbing all over the masts, etc.

**New Year's Day
1st January 1916**

Contrary to our expectations we lifted anchor early Thursday morning & have been on the go ever since. There is a military hospital on board & the A.M.C. practically have the run of it. There is a piano in one of the rooms & as so far I seem to be the only one who can play from music (in the A.M.C.) I am kept "on the go." A large number of men have been & are still seasick but, thanks to my small Scientific Knowledge, I have been all right so far.

We had a concert on board last night. The Colonel & a lot of the heads were there. They moved the piano outside into a sort of landing. The Colonel was chairman & announced the items. They had a programme..... I had to play a pianoforte solo to open it & I also played a lot of accompaniments. One item was rather amusing----- a violin, 2 mandolins & myself at the piano. The violin was about four notes behind the mandolins nearly all through so I had to manage somehow to keep between the two. There were some very good singers though.

We got paid yesterday up to 28th Dec. but I haven't yet decided how much to send back.

I forgot to get the addresses of Uncle Robert & the others in England & will be glad if you can let me have them.

Please keep that old cap of mine as I shall probably want it when I come back.

2 January 1916

Nothing startling happened today. I saw a few flying fish, a small shark & a few albatrosses. We have had beautiful calm weather for the whole time, so far. As they have asked us to post what letters we have, I will close this & write again later.

Your loving son, etc.

Bob
(Private R.O. Snape)

No. 4
At Sea
3rd January 1916

Dear All

We were all rather excited this morning at seeing land-----presumably portion of Western Australia. The water is still comparatively calm - though at times there is a roar of laughter as some unlucky chap gets drenched by a stray wave breaking over the side of the boat. We all had to put on lifebelts as a sort of practice this morning . The reveille goes at 6 a.m.: we have breakfast about 7 dinner at 12 & tea at 5. It began to get rough in the afternoon.

4th January 1916

Sea very rough all day. Ship itching & rolling in all directions. One of the crew told me that the ship was loaded too heavily in the bows & this causes it to pitch more than it otherwise would do.

5th January 1916

Sea calm as a millpond from about 10 a.m.

6th January 1916

Sea beautifully calm all day. Saw a number of flying fish from the boat. The heads of the Army Medical are Major Griffith (Senior Medical Officer), Captain (Dr) Blackburn & Captain (Dr) Longden. Captain Blackburn has been good enough to organise a sort of club or sports committee. We had our first meeting last night. All the heads were present with Capt. (Rev. Father) Kennedy as judge. The names of all the A.M.C. men were put on a slip of paper in one hat & the names of twelve subjects (the rest blanks) in another hat. If the name of a certain subject came out with your name you had to speak on that subject for at least 3 minutes & not more than 5 minutes. The speeches were therefore absolutely impromptu as no-one knew what the subjects were or whether he would draw a blank or not. After three fellows had spoken, I'm blest if they didn't draw my name to speak on "Girls." I didn't make much of a speech but anyhow I made the crowd laugh a few times & managed to keep going for three minutes which was more than some of them did. I said Mr Chairman and gentlemen - I have been asked to speak on a subject I know very little about (Laughter & cries of "I don't think") I said that once upon a time my ideal was a girl with fair hair and blue eyes but one day I met a certain dark girl & immediately changed all my previous opinions (Dr Blackburn here wanted to know her name but I affected not to hear his question). I said I had believed that it seemed to be a sort of law of natural selection that fair boys always liked dark girls best & vice versa. I also said that none of us on board had seen a girl for eight days now (Interruption: "Wait till we get to Egypt!") Yes there were plenty there but they seemed to be the wrong sort. (Laughter) - I forgot what else I said but I know I didn't get nearly first or second prize. They were carried off by the two clergymen - you remember me telling you that we had two ministers in the Corps. One spoke on the "Evils of Egypt" & the other on

the "Effects of alcohol." One fellow could only say about three words on "Marriage" & another only about ten on "Seasickness." On the whole, the speeches were, (I thought) excellent & we spent a most enjoyable evening. The evening closed with a speech on Home Rule by Major Griffith (who is an Irish Protestant) & "The art of making a speech" by Capt. Kennedy. Capt.s Blackburn & Longden also passed a number of witty remarks most of which consisted of slinging off at each other.

7th January 1916

Sea calm. Vaccinating the men. The weather as now noticeably warmer daily. (I might here mention that if you don't feel like wading though all this piffle just keep it on hand for me to refer to when I come back.) Sometimes the voyage seems awfully monotonous but you have to keep rousing yourself up. Keeping in hammock is rather queer. The first night we were all frightened we were going to fall out. I have now just about got used to mine. We have the greatest fun out at bedtime. The hammocks are hung only 15 inches apart. They swing each other all over the place, let down the ropes & do everything silly they can think of. We have nothing to do except hospital duty (8hours on 24 hours off) & cleaning up the hospital. It is now nearly full. The night we left the bay (Port Phillip Bay, VIC.) we heard that conscription had been brought in in England. It may be in force in Australia now. I suppose Frank would be pleased.

8th January 1916

One of the ship's officers photographed the members of the A.M.C. on the boat deck. I have sent to you (No. 5) & one to Madge (wife, married .../.../1915). I hope they come to hand safely.

12th January 1916

I have been sleeping out in the open air for the last three or four nights as it is so hot.

No 6

At Sea

T.S.S. Demosthenes

13th January 1916

Dear All,

We are still having comparatively calm travelling. A Euchre Tournament was arranged among the A.M.C. last night. We had some fun. The winners won 10 games; I only won 6. But I was called away in the middle of it to play at a concert some of the Infantry were holding in another part of the ship. A couple of waggish sergeants had composed a lot of stuff (comic) about the voyage, food, men, etc., & every now & then burst into song, with piano accompaniment to the tune of "Sweet Marie" (one of Father's old songs, I believe).

The first edition of the "AMC Times" came out today. I don't know who the editor is. There seems to be something mysterious about it. They posted up a copy in the Hospital so that the Heads, etc could see it & distributed the rest of the copies amongst us.

Friday the 14th January 1916

There is great excitement on board today as the hills of Ceylon are in sight and we have just been told that we'll be allowed ashore tomorrow.

Love to all,
Your loving son, etc.

Bob
No. 8651
Pte RO Snape
AMC
8th Reinforcements
6th Field Ambulance

No. 8
15th January 1916

Dear All,

We arrived at **Colombo** about 8 o' clock last night. It was partly moonlit & was very interesting watching the different lights as we came into the harbour. The lighthouse flashes very brilliantly & could be seen a long way off. There is a fine new breakwater here with a very narrow opening to admit shipping. I expect Father would scarcely recognise the entrance now. I got ashore with about five others about 1 p.m. the day after arriving (Sat.) I was surprised to find such a small percentage of white people there. We wandered through the town for a while with a procession of natives at our heels trying to sell us all kinds of rubbish at exorbitant prices. One native handed us a printed card with the inscription, "Prince of Wales Hotel - 1st Class meals", etc., & as we were feeling rather hungry, & the name of the place sounded all right, we allowed him to lead the way. We arrived there after turning about ten corners, & were taken in both physically & financially. It was a large but decidedly queer place. The only things we seemed able to order were eggs & bacon & when we got them we couldn't eat them. We ate a piece of dry bread each, drank a glass of lemonade, paid a farthing & cleared (off). One chap (Joe Rhodes) said he must buy some silk before he left. We went into all sorts of shops & looked at all kinds of silks & had the time of our lives trying to beat the prices down. As we wouldn't give more than 9d (nine pence) for 3/6d (three shillings & sixpenny) articles no business resulted. But it really was funny watching Joe arguing the point. As far as we could see, there seemed to be only about 2 shops run by whites. Anyhow, we lined into the Grand Oriental Hotel (a place bigger than our "Grand") & got something decent. We had an electric tram ride & the conductor (native) tried to jibe us & another argument ensued. During the afternoon, we went for a motorcar ride over the island. We went about twenty miles (for 8/- the lot) & saw some fine sights. The scenery was just like stage painting in some places. Hundreds of coconut & other palms. We also went thro' a Buddhist temple, having to first remove our boots. We got back on board the ship about 7 p.m. after agreeing that we had spent one of the most enjoyable & amusing days so far. I sent three postcards from Colombo one to Mother, one to Madge & one to Aunt Marian & hope they arrive safely.

16th January 1916

The natives finished coaling & watering in their funny old fashion this morning. A few of us (myself included) jumped in off the boat & had a good swim. It was rather a novel experience. We had to keep clear of the numerous native craft. When the Heads

found out we were ordered out of the water. A couple of hours later we cleared out of Colombo. Passed a school of porpoises. The wristlet watch is keeping very good time thankyou, although I have to daily put it back on account of the change in time. A rather amusing thing happened after we had left Colombo. The shift changes a 3 p.m. & the fellows were just going off & the new shift just commencing when one of the crew came in & put the clock back to 10 mins to 3. The new shift roared with laughter & cleared out & made the other chaps go back to work another 10 minutes.

17th January 1916

The A.M.C. gave a concert to everyone on the ship this evening. It went off very well - about 500 turned up. They have a small printing press on board & we got programmes printed. Am sending you one. (Sent programmes to Madge, Aunt Ada, Miss Baulch, Bob Callendar & Uncle Robert.

18th January 1916

Passed a small island with a white lighthouse.

20th January 1916

There was a hot argument at the tea table as to whether bachelors should be taxed or not. I argued 'Yes.' They are going to debate the subject this evening.

21st January 1916

Another issue of the A.M.C. Times came today. The identity of the editor has not yet been discovered! I am enclosing a copy. Would you mind keeping things like this for me when I come back. I'd rather not have them destroyed. The weird "poem" appearing in the paper was manufactured by myself. The editor's remarks on Colombo are somewhat over critical. I am sending a copy of the rag to Uncle Chas. Miers as things like that used to amuse him.

23rd January 1916

Some mountainous land in sight this morning. It is said to be the coast of Africa

24th January 1916

We are passing several islands & lighthouses which make the voyage more interesting. How I wish Father was on board so that I could discuss these things with him. I'm sure he could tell me a lot about them. The passage between some of the islands is very narrow.

26th January 1916

We were paid £1-0-0 (one pound) this morning. We had another Euchre Tournament last night. I had better luck winning 9 games out of 13. The winner won 11 games. Please give me any information of Harold you may have received. I am writing to him & hope to see him - perhaps in Egypt.

27th January 1916

We have been informed that the last mail closes on board at 7 o'clock this evening. So I must draw this to a close.

With love to all

Bob

No. 9

Zeitoun Camp

Egypt

Wed. 2nd February 1916

Dear All

We left the ship last Monday at Suez & took the train to Zeitoun, (4 miles from Cairo). We arrived here at midnight & then marched into Camp. They are short of tents so some of us have to sleep in the mess shed & the rest outside. I have fortunate, being amongst those that secured a place in the mess shed. The weather is delightful during the day but it is very cold & dewy at night. We travelled 3rd Class on the railways & had no lights & the only lamps seem to hold oil enough to last ½ an hour. The carriages however are exceedingly well-sprung & don't jolt much. The railway runs near the canal for a good part of the way & a lot of the scenery was very interesting. In the morning I immediately made inquiries for Harold & was told that the RANBT (Royal Australian Naval Bridging Train) was about 100 yards from us. When I got there, I was disgusted to find out they were reinforcements & that Harold was at ('CENSORED')..... journey from here. However this was good news. I wrote a letter to him & posted it at once asking him to try & come to Zeitoun to meet me as none of us are allowed to go to ('CENSORED')..... I hope to be able to see him We walked to Heliopolis after afternoon parade. It is a mile from our camp & is a magnificent city. The buildings are very fine. We took electric trams from Heliopolis to Cairo (abt 4 miles) & had tea there. Taking it all round, Cairo is really a fine city. Much better than I expected it to be. The trains & trams knock spots off the Melbourne ones. Yesterday afternoon, we were marched to Mary's Well. It is about 3 miles from Camp & the scenery along the way is very ancient. The virgin Mary is supposed to have stopped at this well when she escaped into Egypt from Herod. There is an old tree with a fence around it where she is said to have rested under.

Camping conditions here are (as usual) much better than I anticipated, though of course there are a few growlers amongst us. Oranges & tomatoes are cheap. I never tasted better oranges. Haven't received any letters from you yet & don't expect to for a few weeks.

Hoping you are all well - as I am

Your loving son & brother

Bob

PS: Am enclosing souvenir of boat & AMC Times

a/d No, 8651

Pte RO Snape

AAMC

8th Reinforcements, 6th Field Ambulance, Intermediate Base, Egypt.

No. 10

The Young Men's Christian Association

with H.M Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in Egypt

Ezbet el Zeitoun

February 5th 1916

Dear Father,

You will have no doubt received my letters, telling of our arrival at Colombo, Suez & Zeitoun (Cairo). The boat made very slow progress from Colombo to Suez, owing to the bad coal they got at Colombo & a couple of breakdowns in the engine room.

Egypt is a most interesting place. I don't suppose you had time to see much of it, on your way to & from England. In Cairo, I was much struck by the immense size of the buildings. The residences, even in the poorer quarters are mostly three & four storeys. We are well treated at the Camp (Zeitoun). It is 8 miles out of Cairo. We walk to Helarieh railway station on the Marg railway. This station is only about a mile from Camp & has a splendid train service. They run into Cairo in less than a quarter of an hour & the fare is only $\frac{1}{2}$ piastre ($1\frac{1}{4}$ d. or, one penny farthing) which is half-fare for soldiers.

Yesterday, we marched out across the desert to the Pumping Station. I never saw a more beautifully kept place. It is practically the same as the Spotswood plant (in Melbourne) I should think but the wells are only 12 feet deep. There are 4 double cylinder plunger pumps (9 Simpson's) 21 inch delivery. The sewage has to be pumped a long distance, to the farm. They also have four small Allen high speed engines working four small dynamos.

We marched to an old Egyptian obelisk this morning. It is about seventy feet high & extends for 140 feet into the ground. It is covered with Egyptian characters & is one solid block of granite 4,500 years old. How it was got into position is a mystery. The native wells in this district are very queer. Two wooden wheels work into each other. One goes down the well & has buckets or jars attached & the other is turned round & round by a blindfolded ox.

(unfinished letter).

No. 12

(Letterhead: British Soldiers' Café Cairo, Egypt
February 14th 1916

Dear All,

I HAVE SEEN HAROLD!

He sent me the enclosed wire, which I rec'd last Sat. morning. I met him at my tent about 10 o'clock sat. night. He had leave for the weekend & slept in our tent that night. Mrs Zuilici had written to me during the week asking me to come to her place on Sun. morning so after breakfast I schemed away from Camp & went with Harold. We arrived at Mrs Zuilici's about 9-30 a.m. & went through the Lesson* there. Her husband is French & as she is the only person here interested in C.S. (Christian Science) she made us very welcome. Her house, or rather flat, is beautifully furnished.

You can understand how delighted Harold & I were to see each other. We sat outside & gassed for an hour on Sat. night before we went to bed. He has had some most interesting experiences on the (Gallipoli) Peninsula. He showed me a letter from Frank dated 11th January so he is getting his mail quicker than I am at present. He is looking splendid & seems a tremendous big fellow now. He & a few more of the N.B.T.** were actually the last to leave the Peninsula & the fires destroying the stores were well alight before they got off. They had to wait in case anything went wrong with the pontoons***.

We had dinner together & travelled to the Pyramids. We climbed the largest (Cheops) together. Got back to Cairo for tea & spent the evening knocking around the city. We stayed the night in Cairo as he had to get back to Ismailia this (Monday) morning. We had needless to say a most enjoyable weekend together. It seemed like a pleasant dream most of the time.

I am sending you a bit of Egyptian tapestry? By mail. It is certainly not very pretty but I think very quaint. I am also sending a bit of stone from the Pyramids. I am sending a piece of stone to Uncle Joseph as well.

Am keeping very well & having a splendid time _ still at Zeitoun. Hoping you are well & happy.

Your loving son & bthr
Bob

* By this stage, both Bob & Harold Snape were interested in Christian Science. 'The Lesson' referred to is one of the lessons in Christian Science with Key to the Scriptures, by Mary Baker Eddy.

** N.B.T. = The Royal Australian Naval Bridging Train. Pontoons were used to build jetties for landing men & supplies & evacuating the wounded

No. 16
Cairo
Saturday 4th March 1916

My Dear Father & Mother & Frank'

I was delighted to receive actually three letters from you this morning:-- No. 2, No. 3 & Frank's letter. However, I think it would be better to discontinue using those thick envelopes with the red printing on because one arrived completely unstuck & the other two came open as easily as possible. Besides that, they leave no room for re-addressing. Thankyou for enclosing envelopes & paper, it is not always possible to get it.

It was good of you to wire to Shaw's but of course we didn't stop at W.A. But I'll send them a card.

Am sorry it was so cold at Wallan. Am pleased to hear that Madge* was out. I think it is better to keep the house full of visitors while we are away, it should relieve the loneliness somewhat.

I was surprised to see Les Kennedy today. He came from Tel el Kebir to see me. I went round Cairo with him this afternoon & we had tea together. We also went to a picture show. I enclose the programme. It will add to the collection I have at home. Les is looking very well but says he has had a rather rough time in the Army. He is under Col. Elliott at present & is in C Company 59th Battalion.

I will write a full answer to your letters later as I want this to catch the mail. Hope Aunt Mabel is better.

Your loving son & brother,

Bob

No. 8651

Pte R.O. Snape

8/6 Fld Amb

Egypt

P.S. Arthur Porter arrived here by the T.S.S. "Themistocles" the other day, so the old firm of Snape & Porter is going strong again.

- Madge = Margaret Snape, nee McLaughlin. Bob & Madge married secretly before he left Australia for the War.

Letterhead: The Young Men's Christian Association with H.M. Force in Egypt

No. 18

March 13th 1916

Dear All,

I will get to the 6th field ambulance, at last tomorrow & will have a good chance of getting Harold transferred there too. He is quite agreeable & I know you would like it better at Home. I met Morris Platt in Cairo the other day. He is looking exceptionally fat & well. I think. I hope you are well & receiving all my letters.

Your loving son,
Bob.

No. 8651

Pte R.O Snape
8th Reinf.
6th Field Ambulance
Ister Base
Egypt

PS: Will send cards in future if unable to send letters.

Bob.

DIARY FRAGMENTS: March 20th to December 24th 1916

Mar. 4 Transferred to 2nd Divisional Ammunition Column with Pte T.S. Power. Till at Zeitoun. Our duties are to assist the Dr. At sick parades & dole out the medicines, bandage wounds etc.

Mar.10 Went to Choubra Village by tram. This is a nice ride, the road is lined each side with sycamore trees. At Choudra we hired one of those queer Arab sailing boats and sailed down the Nile to a place called Rod al Farag. We took another tram ride back to Cairo. It was a most interesting trip.

Mar.13 Got news this morning that I had been transferred to the 6th Field Ambulance, **Ismailia**. A fellow called Mitchell who is a great friend of Power's asked me if I was agreeable to changing places with him & of course I was only too glad, seeing that he was at Ismailia only about a mile from the NBT. He knew an officer and thus managed to get the transfer through. I am going to Ismailia tomorrow. In the afternoon, met an Arab named Abdel Kader, whom I have got to know fairly well & he took me thro' the Mouska (mosque?) & Bazaars.

Mar.20. Sailed from Alexandria for Marseilles on S.S. "City of Edinburgh". Choppy sea; ship rolling a lot; steering a zig-zag course on account of submarines. Mine-sweeping cruiser convoying us and always in sight ahead.

Mar 21. Calm weather.

Mar. 22. We have to always wear our lifebelts. Cruiser left us during morning.

Mar. 23. Weather rough last night: calm this morning. Submarine rumours. S.S. Minneapolis said to have been torpedoed within a short distance of us this morning. (afterwards found to be correct).

Mar. 24/25 Passed Italian Penal Settlement Id. Pont----- & Sardinia.

Mar. 26. Coast of France in sight in morning: beautiful entrance to Marseilles: white- grey rocks and Notre Dame on top of high hill in distance, also Monte Crristo id. And castle. Arrived Marseilles about 8 p.m. and anchored at quay alongside large M.M. steamers. (Paul Lecat and André Debon- laid up, being fitted with small guns for defence against submarines). Had to assist with unloading A.M.C. stuff from the ship from about midnight.

Mar. 27. After assisting to clean out the holds, marched to railway stn. Train left Marseilles at 4.30 p.m. III class carriages (“dog-boxes”).

Mar. 28. All night in train. Passed most beautiful scenery and thro’ long tunnels. Railway skirts the sea for long distances.

Mar.29. still in train: Snow fell. Passed thro. Lyons. The third day of our journey we passed thro. Versailles, Juvisy, Creil, Longueau, St. Just, Amiens, changing from the P.L.M. to the Nord Rly. At Juvisy. Arrived at our destination (Thiennes) at 4 a.m. on Thurs. Mar. 30th after being 60 hrs. on journey. We marched about 7 miles, through Aire to Warnes, where we were billeted in barns.

Mar. 31. Marched to Aire and inspected by Kitchener. Warnes: issued with gas helmets and had gas test.

Apr 2. (Sun.) Walked to Roquetoire church and stayed a few minutes at service. Fine little church but poor organ. 5 of us bought two bottles of champagne at an estaminet.

Apr. 6. Made preparations for leaving Warnes.

Apr. 7. Marched from Warnes at 1 p.m. through Thiennes and stopped night at Haverserque.

Apr. 8. Left at 8 a.m. and marched through Galonne, Merville, Estaires-La Gorgue, Sailly to a place near Doulieu, where we were billeted for the night abt. 18-mile march.

Apr. 9. Left at 3 p.m. and marched to Erquingham, where we were billeted in Mairie.

Apr.10. Marched to Baths in old dye-works (laundry?) between Erquingham and Armentieres. Issued with 2 loaves of bread for 20 men. Worked in clothes -drying room.

Apr. 19. Working at baths meantime. Order read out today that stenographer wanted at Orderly Room. Applied for job and got it, starting work same night. The Orderly Room is in the Ecole Communale , Erquingham.

Apr 24. Applied for Harold’s transfer to 6th Field Amb. Watched shells landing in vicinity. Spy discovered signalling to enemy by turning arms of windmill.

Apr. 25. Watched enemy shells landing in vicinity.

Apr. 26. Still in Orderly Room, Erquingham. Had play on pipe organ in local church.

May 9. Arranged with little French boy to blow organ for me at 50 centimes per hour.

May 10. Trying to compose music.

May 21. Erquingham bombarded: trying time for us. Capt. McKenzie killed.

May 23. Sent to Hazebrouck via L'Estrade and Bailleul as O.C. said he thought my eyes needed to be tested. (am sure there is nothing wrong with them but I was screwing them up a bit on account of looking at a strong acetylene light that night. Told to report again.

May 28. Went to Hazebrouck again. Told eyes were quite alright.

May 29. Returned from Hazebrouck to D.R.S. at L'Estrade.

June 2. Returned from L'Estrade to Erquingham.

June 8. Biked to Bac St. Maur. The railway is used as far as here.

June 25. Met Harold for the first time in France (Erquingham-sur-Lys).

June 26. 18 shells fired into Erquingham during night. Biked to l'Armée in morning to see Harold (2 ½ miles approx.) saw him. Went to D.R.S. at 7 p.m.

July 2. Applied for transfer to 2nd C.C.S. (Casualty Clearing Station) at suggestion of Capt. Tucker. (This proved unsuccessful).

July 7. 6th Field Ambulance left Erquingham and marched thro' Croix du Bac & Steenwerke to Baillieul.

July 10. Marched from Baillieul thro' Strazeele to Borré – 9 miles. Went in car). Old church here. 1626 marked on side. First pastor, 1300.

July 11. Marched from Borre thro' Hazebrouck and Ebblinghem to Renescure. Went in car. Visited two castles at Renescure. Very old castle and church dated 1116.

July 12. Marched from Renescure at 3 p.m. to Arques R.S. nr. St. Omer. Took train there to Amiens at 8 p.m. arriving 6 a.m. next morning.

July 13. Marched thro' town of Amiens thro' Ailly-sur-Somme to Breilly.

July 16. Still at Breilly. Visited beautiful mansion which had been burned. Said to have been burned by owner – a spendthrift.

July 18. Walked to the village of Picquigny (abt.1½ miles). Saw ruins of ancient castle built 1100 and church built about same time. Peace of Amiens supposed to have been signed here.

July 19. Abt. 8 p.m. marched from Breilly thro' St. Sauveur to Longpre.

July 20. Left Longpré abt. 10 a.m. and marched thro' Rainneville & Toutencourt abt. 16 miles from Harponville-Bomme.

July 26. Called up at 12.30 a.m. Packed up and left Harponville 4 a.m. and marched thro' Varennes to Albert (Bivouacked in open on plain (old brick fields) outside town.

July 27. Remained all day at Albert. A party of Stretcher Bearers was sent to an advanced dressing station at Becourt Wood.

July 28. Left Albert 9.30 a.m. in ca5r thro' Hedauville (large gaol?) to Warloy-Baillon and took over Officers' Hospital there.

Aug. 1. Sent from Warloy in car to Albert to work at 2nd D.H.Q. G.S. office (7 p.m.).

Aug. 4/5. Big stunt came off. (Pozières). Albert is shelled every few hours, both day and night.

Aug. 7. D.H.Q. left albert at noon. Left in car through Hedauville, Warloy, Vadencourt, Contay and Herissart to Rubempre.

Aug. 8. Left Rubempre 6 p.m. by car thro' Talmas & Wargnies to Canaples.

Aug.15. In evening walked to Halloy and back.

Aug. 18. Moved back to Rubempre.

Aug. 23. Moved from Rubempre to Tara Hill (a couple of miles past Albert). Office here in bell tent and slept in little old dugout.

Aug.28. Waited 4 hours for motor lorry then back to Rubempre again at 6 p.m. thro' Bouzincourt, Senlis, Hedauville Varennes, Acheux, Toutencourt & Herissart.

Sept. 1. Moved to Doullens by lorry. Slept under museum.

Sept. 3. Went with advance party by train from Doullens thro' St. Pol and Hazebrouck to Popéringhe. Walked thence to Hoograaf (Belgium) and stayed a night at 1st Aust. Div. H.Q.

Sept. 4. Went in car from Hoograaf to new quarters in Reningshelst.

Sept. 10. Raid by 4th Battalion last night brought in one German prisoner. The wire-cutting party appeared to have lost direction, working too far to the north. The raiding party decided to enter at point arranged but found the wire intact and failed to penetrate. They threw bombs until time limit & returned. The wire-cutting party killed (?) one officer & 4 men, penetrated the trenches & brought away 5 prisoners. When returning, this party again lost its way, went 300 yds to the north & were fired at from our trenches. The officer was wounded & one prisoner killed & another wounded. Only one prisoner was brought in, the others escaped.

Sept. 12. Harold came on horseback to see me. (He is at Boeschoepe horselines.)

Sept. 17. Biked across frontier into France to Boeschoepe and spent afternoon with Harold.

Sept.18. Put in an application for Harold to be trans. To D.H.Q. as draftsman.

Sept. 20. Harold paid me a visit.

Sept.22. Biked to 6th F.Amb. (near Popéringhe) to see old pals.

Sept. 23. H. Came to see me.

Oct.2 Harold transferred to D.H.Q. (His application for Flying Corps unsuccessful).
Sent cable home: "France well. Harold transferred with me."

Oct. 20. 9 a.m. by lorry moved from Reningshelst to Steenvoorde via Abeele. Fine church here.

Oct. 21. Left Steenvoorde 5 a.m. Marched thro' Gadewaersvelde, thence rail to St. Omer, then marched thro' St. Martin to Tilques. Put up at fine old château.

Oct 24. In afternoon, H. & I got leave & walked into St. Omer. A pretty town. Saw ruins of fine church destroyed by fire & cannon during French Revolution. Returned Tilques 6.30 p.m.

Oct 25. Left Tilques 12.45 a.m. by motor lorry to Audrecq, then train thro' Calais, Boulogne & Abbeville to Pont Remy. Got fine view of sea at Boulogne & Paris Plage. Retrained at Pont Remy & marched to Ailly-le Haut Clocher where we established our H.Q. at the hôtel de ville.

Oct. 27. Left Ailly in morning thro' St. Sauveur & Amiens to Ribemont.

Nov. 5. Left Ribemont 9 a.m. thro' Dernancourt & Meaulte to ruined château at Fricourt Wood (nothing left but the cellars). Left Fricourt 6.30p.m. as member of advanced H.Q. on limber part of the way thro' Montauban to Carlton Trench near Longeval & Delville Wood. Place was difficult to find owing to darkness & mud.

Nov 9. Left Carlton Trench & back to Fricourt.

Nov. 16. Big battles going on. Worked until 3.35 a.m. on Divisional War Diary.

Nov. 19. Harold sent to Corps H.Q. re his application for Flying Corps, but had no success.

Nov. 22. Shifted back to Ribemont at 9.30 a.m. in a dense fog.

Nov. 28. Harold went back to his old unit, 4th Div Artillery.

Nov. 29. Walked to Heilly for a bath. Left Ribemont & trained to Vignacourt. Fine organ in church at Vignacourt. Got curé's permission & played for an hour.

Dec. 19. Left Vignacourt by train to Ribemont.

Dec. 24. Left Ribemont by lorry to Fricourt, thence on foot to Bernafay Wood.