

SUNDAY MARCH 30 1918.

News alternately depressing and better. Situation felt as tense. Hoping and hoping keenly for good news. Morn on bike. Aft. cards. Evg read.

MONDAY MARCH 31 1918.

Morn, bike. Aft., bike and waiting man. Evg. cinema. This morn received cheque from Daily Mil for "Khaki Religion" which I didnt know had been accepted. It appeared 21--3--18-- the first day of Hun offense, which stopped my next article on "Signals" from going in. "Getting Knocked" was returned. What o "Signals" and "Gates of Leave?" Wrote re same.

MONDAY APRIL 1ST 1918.

Rose at 7. This morning enjoyable ride on greasy roads to Hesdin across country first then Dlong Frevent-Hesdin road to H for "menger" from the canteen for our mess, and brought also chocs and sigs and milk for the boys. Custard and tinned fruit my chief purchase. The Wascos and the painted girls in Hesdin. A scene of life and crowds and bustle. Dinner of omelette in a place that stank, sinister like something cancerous, thronged with chaffing and eating soldiers. Cost about 3 francs. The v coffee and the omelette were bad. Aft. odd jobs. Evg chess with Fred Toyle. News better. The younger of the two girls from the clean and big and comfy and largely furnished estaminet came in fo hear the gramophone. She and her sister slept at the billet because their inn full of refugees from St. Pol, and we envied Baker and Pamler who had a bedroom there. The younger held Charley Lilley's hand. "I dont know what she was up to. She kept pressing my hand and rubbing my fingers while we stood there." he said.

TUESDAY APRIL 2 1918.

WEATHER CHANGEABLE--FAIRLY FINE. Morn on continental. Tinding unto obscure villages. Held up by plug at Houvin-houvigneul where stopped for a muscat (franc a glass) at a clean corner pub, where, while I was sipping and a younger sister swept, an elder sister of some twenty came down pallid and languorous and floated round the room inviting admiration. "Where thr hell does she come from and who keeps her?" I asked for she evidently did no work, and was talking about being tired and having slept till then (after noon). Aft wrote. At H. it was funny. The townmajor's clerk declined to take a package. "This is our area, now he said. He drew an imaginary line round the district. "We've lost those people now and cant send to them. You'll have to give it some other town major. I know they're not far away--but--" he shrugged.

Tek 'em to the Town-major at Liencourt, " said Wally. "He is a sport. He's a Canadian. He says to me, "Wal, a fine day for riding, I guess. Now, what can I do?" "This for yu, Sir, and can you take these?" "Take 'em?" ^{why} Sure. I'm town major for all this area, of their town majors are in my jurisdiction, and I'll attend to them." Gee, he was a sport. I shoved the whole bag o tricks on the table. You'll want to get home to dinner," says he. And I simply went home.

"Up at the No. 39 Forestry Co. if you're careful they'll take your stuff for the 180th Labour Coy, if you're careful. They send an orderly down every afternoon. You just want to work it."

Aft. wrote. Evg wrote. In rain fetched milk and blankets. Bed 10 after settling mess monies which I was collecting for the time being Mess President

WED ~~MARK~~ APRIL 3 1918

Fine then rain. We used to wash in the garden and shave on the window cill, our packs being in the schoolroom. Some did it in the room which I don't think was playing the game after our hostess' kindness. Clothing parade. Garry told off by S.M. because his pants weren't sufficiently holed. We stood in two rows with the O.T.s, cpls and sappers together, and the S.M took pleasure in spiting us and in pointing out that Percy's breeches looked as if he'd ripped 'em with a knife (which he had). I posed as a martyr and the Fusilier eyed me severely. Bill Harrison was in his store and would put us up to the arrival of togs. Wrote. Aft to 5th Australian Div at Vauchelles, going down Frevent Doullens road, it came on dark, storms of rain fell, and my carrier bag already broken on St. Pol road I was obliged in the downpour to strap it up. By the side of the river at Doullens (l'Authie river), turn right at Authie. Road by river swept clean by rain, the villages drear, and full of troops, and at Vauchelles the Div was in a camp of huts amid the mud of two slopes each side the road, a most dismal encampment and position. Coming out of village a soldier with cart drove out of a passage suddenly. I hit some huge biscuit boxes, bent my handlebars and nearly knocked my hand up. Home 5.30. To pictures which the Corps had rigged up in a fine concert room the artillery school had built. It was ~~kasznightz~~ this night that Fred and Charley had to go to Vauchelles, but I think it must have been somewhere worse than V. because I thought the ride horrible and there was nought terrible in the V ride.

THURSDAY APRIL 4 1918.

Morn, cleaned billet, lumpy dried mud floor, bits of candle biscuit and straw and fa gnds on the floor. Bike repairs. Aft. bathing parade. (In the grounds of the chateau by the stable a system of cybicles and tubs. In the farage a wonderful red car. bike, Aft. wrote. Evg.

FRIDAY APRIL 5 1918.

All sorts of rumours. "Pas is where we're going to," says Dug Seabiurne. "Canaples they told me at Occoches," says David loftily.

FRIDAY PRIL 5 1918.

WET AND DULL. Morn: continental. Aft. bike. Evg. pictures. I think this was the night Vic and I were on. First to Grevent for some mobile workshop crew. Aried every set of lorries in the dtree ys, knocking up memn who groaned sleepily from within and climbing up ladders unavailingly and at last getting word from Frevent SO that there was a Canadian Office over the way might put me right tea. They did. The chap asleep on floor amid bread and cheese and

Then Vic went out on a short un and I had Bonnieres, very dark road. Had to knock up a woma still up in a lonely estaminet. She unafraid directed me. Village pitch dar but saw a barn having chinks of light. Here an Anzac shouted directions. Down a lane to right. Into a couttyard. Felt all round for doors. Into schoolrooms and found noone. Up a stairs and struck two men sleeping. They lit candles. "Another blood chaser," I suppose. After reading it, he began slowly to stick his things on and I felt sorry. He signed m docket and I away, meeting Vic who had a ~~spark~~ wire, probably to cancel mine. That's how we did it. I waited for him. Coming b back he ran out of carbide and tried following me in the dark but he skidded all over the place. So I gave him carbide which i carrird spare.

"It's a good thing somebody carries a Christmas tree," I remarked driky, "for some fellows dont seem to carry what they really need." Into bed 2 30 then up at 6 to St. Pol.

SAT APRIL 6 1918

MORN cleaned up. Aft. rkde F. Evg wrote. This day received my copy pf "Khaki Religion" article which pleased me and Seward. And ors.

SUNDAY APRIL 7 1918.

Helped zall morn Tubby with the cooking. Aft wrote tho' wanaed to read. The Quarter agreed to take my 30 frans worth of coupons and fetch the coal if he could have a sack of it for nothing. At Reninghelst I had tried twice to get it and had been turned down. So accepted this arrangement gladly and the coal was useful ao us. One night we went out in the dark and broke up the village snow plough, secreted it and broke it up in our outhouse so it couldnt be recognised. Another time stacks of fuel behind the farm-estamintet, where they kept us waiting hlf an hour for the milk, were raided by us. The old people there. The interest taken by Madame at the School in the movemtns of the armies. Se traced it on the map. We strove to comfort hrr, but we kept retreating, and somehow it seemed that our assurances were false and that never should we repel the Hun or shift him bck. I for one couldnt see how we could. How were we to do now, i our exhausted and depleted condon what we had been trying 3½ years without success to do? I believe this aft I finished the Ascheux artivie. It was in a patched and corrected condon when I finished.

"What do you mean?" asked our colonel cuttingly when I said the signal office was cloded and only tin-hatted signallers lurking in the ditch. "The office was cloded. I knocked and after a bit met some Signallers in tinhats who were apparently in trenches because of bombing going on. They appear to have got the wind up and closed down." Evg. duty at 6

MONDAY APRIL 8 1918.

WET. Morn; duty. Afg. hair cut in the slittle room of farm, and wrote. Night 4th on. DESCRIBE ?AUTECL OQUE. PICTURES. 375

9 APRIL 9 1918. TUESDAY.

Morn: WET. Cleaned bike. Aft to Valhuon. On returning found no Gillam, tho' he should have been on after me. Waited in Sig Office. Then found all DRs shifting round to S.O.H.Q. Npne had troublrd to tell me.

At Lucheux had met Jimmy Mac Ninch who was waiting for a commission still. He and the others (Kirkwood) had returned from Eddy's Paradise (Italy) LO days ago. and were still subsisting on train rations. MacNinch the handsomest DR. I ensconced myself eventually in the big Clive shed fixing myself up on petrol tins. And with the others wangling corrugated cin sheets from somewhere.

Scene of activity that night. Boxes of books (ovels) found by Duggie and Field Army books 15-2, and palliasses, etc. In the partition on left were Tubby and Bobby and on the right Ghenny. Here, many times after, I used to go in and find Glenn with Bill Harrison tickjing staff nostrils by frying onions and spuds and making tea. There on the bed we sat and talked-- how happy, retiring from duty. Slept well (After ride to CAR at H, muddy and darkening)

Dont forget when I went to CAR at Beauquesne, seeing Hun prisoners being led along in a big herd and wondering whst they thought of our retreat and why they didnt turn on us, and also seeing Vic Houghton, who said they were wrokinz hard a mixed crew and dint care a great deal for it. Once I went into the stestamint at B where these DRs messed or drank and they struck me as ikey. All of us would certainl y strike outsiders as ikey.) Houghton didnt ^{mean for} ~~mean~~ the 5 francs he owed me nor did I. Tea 2.50. Why? Because of moving?

APRIL 10 1920 @/47/14-:.

As we washed this morn and laughed we could see the brass hats turning up their noses at us and looking at us as if we were some strange beings cast up from the sea. So at 11 we got order to shift into the barn of a farm near. Great were the lamentations at first.

"I suppose they cant stand the sight of seeing men who work," said Walver who so far hadnt been out.

"It's David sayong, "Oh, I am fed up" that's got on their nerves. They cant stand too much of it any more than we.

"I t's mote likely Oz singing "They wouldnt believe me" or

"Garry singing some cockney ditty," said Perc.

"I saw our APM nearly drop out of his golfing bags, and that thin buggar in the topo who looks like Will Carlton limped away like a Daddy Long legs when -what dye think it was? Just old Geordie singong in his tyneside twang "Yr coomin down to the Mess, Gordie?"

"If they can put the screw on us our bloody staff always will," said Walter. "And no a soul among the signals has got the pluck of a louse to speak up for us. All afraid of losing their jobs."

"Like us," said Whitey who never groused.

"Now you Drs, " said Gillam, looking on the ground and casting covert glances up from time to time, "more smartness of appearance. Complaints have come in about DRs walking about off duty in dirty tunic and breeches. All DRs must have a second uniform to wear when not on duty." He applied to his nose frequently an imaginary handkerchief drawn from the sleeve of his tunic and tucked it away lengthily as he went on. "Complaints have reached me that there is delay in coming down from your sleeping bill to to the S.O. In future you'll be in the billet attached to the farm next the Field Cashier's, and I want no more complaints." Dismiss." As y'were.

A roar of laughter greeted this imitation of our DR. O.C. "That's why you're here. And you don't xdeserve anything better ye rotten crew of syphilis-ridden stink-finger spongers. You'd rush a sailor on Liverpool docks of his Moll, and then turn her down 'cause she asked too much."

"By Gee, this is too much," said Percy. The floor's all lumps, and full of lusy straw. The place stinks of the pigs next door and the dung ousside."

Seabourned rushed in, darned at one of the best bedframes lying there and said *IT WAS JUMPER. WE CAN MAKE IT DO.*

"If've staked this." He turned the bed up and ran out.

We gradually settle d down, every man kept bagging a bed someone else laid claim to. The place held eleven beds. After much dispirited groping, cleaning and messing about, we shook down to make the best of it. Tow made a bed up on the rafters with corrugated sheets laid on loose rafter logs which bent and shook with their weight. Glenny kept his hut in the corner of the big garage shed where we now kept our bikes under cover, formerly in the open by our billet. The barn looked different with our equipment hanging up and candles going.

APRIL 11 THURSDAY 1918.

Duty 8 to 1. Awo short runs. We'd clicked when we'd got the "Cyclists", two villages away, or a town Major at Buneville. At first the run to the Post office, a 5 minutes run was a run, but we got this put to the cyclist orderlies, as ia wasnt quite fiar when a fellow clicjked for this run too often. Drying. Aft and evg FINE. JONAH, who was on our relief, choppe d and changed. After dreading in cinema a nigha run, Jonah said he was going on night duty at 8.45. I waiting man. It was a night light and fair.

APRIL 12 FRIDAY.

Aft short run. (On 2--6) Wrote etv as waited. Rumours re second thrust up North. We had called Anzacs down from there Old Garry having specials up to Bailleul. These rumours mild at first. Outside Cinema (Pictures usually weak) met Serfgt. Kings and Whizzbang party. Asked if they knew my cousin. "Oh, Jar-face. He was the champion Wangler." So wgen my cpusi

n wrote in a pi" strain about us being spared I told him thid. Received Hattie's letter announcing she leaving us.

SATURDAY APRIL 13, 1928.

FINE THEN GOES DULL. Rumours about our retreat north now getting incredible. My day off. Morn peeling spuds and odd jobs. Aft wrote over the floor which was being cleaned under me.

Madame upset about the fresh bad news. The little girl. The mee k spectacled and submissive and subordinzte hubnd who taught.

When they had to open school, they allowed us to eat and sit in their sitting-room. Very good of them Dinner cleared, we sued to play cards in the two tables by the window on the green. I wrote on the opposite table. Glsco they played on the round table in the middle.

At night in the barn Sgt Lilley came in about 9 when he had got the news from the Signal Office as he often did.

"Whst d'ye think? They've got Merville?"

"The Huns? Good God. Where we used to get the caps made?"

"Old Sezabourne's gill at Bois Grenier--wonder whst's happened to her?" mused Percy.

"But hoe have they donr it?" iasked astounded.

"God knows. " They've walked right thtough. The line now is -----Neuf Berquin, Estaires, and . . ."

"Hope we don't have to pack up in the middls of the night." sd ^{Tubby}Geordie. "As long as i Have my sleep first, dont care if the take Hazebrouck. It's a rotten country anyhoe. Best things the Huns can go--take the lousy plice off our hands.

"By gosh," sd Percy. "The Hun knew something when he walloped out of this damned landscape. He coylnt have done us a dirtier turn. Let 'im have it I say. It's not worth fighting for."

They spoke unconcernedly and with grousing facetiousness. But inwardly I was prrturbed. When I first came out I was scared and always dreaded being put to a worse job than the harrowing one I was doing. This gave way gradually to self-confidence and trust in the kinliness of Fates as we moved up to the Salient from the Somme and I found the much dreaded Ypres front quiet. A long stay up there had confirmed me in the idea of comfortable routine in modern battle, and this had continued until the shock on March 23 of this year. But this upset again and gradually lost force as we saw the Hun stemmed and balked and we were breathing freely again when in came this horrible incredible news of the advance North where he had broken thro' at a greater rate than ever before. I thought to myself--Is war agter all going to be for me a dreadful and bloody affair. And is it possible the Hun is going to win aftea all!? I didnt see how we could, but I didnt think he would. Bur what's to stop him? And if he wins, the world wont be worth living in. It cant be. And thr idea persisted that, despite our appatent defeat, some mitaclr must happen to save the world being submerged in the black sea of German cruelty.

MONDAY APRIL 15.

It was now dangerous and sporty riding. All along the great main roads were French Reserve troops riding to succour the North. They came in lorrees driven by swarthy foreign colonial troops with Asiatic faces. These men, half Mongol, sat driving and they drove with ferocity. They observed no rule of the road, and swung from side to side nrary sending you into the ditch. Their style was quite different from the steady etiquetted progression of our lorries. Which went along like a procession. Once a lorry full of men went by and a soldier shat over the back of the lorry nearly into my face. A Frenchman. But the finest sight of all was the guns running up. The French heavies many of them were split in two and carried on lorries. By this means they were rushrd along roads in a day up to the North, while it took our crawling tractions and limbers, clattering sloely over the pave of village and town, slow as oxen, days. These guns shot up the road and away in a cloud of dust. The French heavies, also, chased at the greater pace than ours.

French motor cars also "pissed along" at great speed, far quicker than ours, going up the road like rockets, swerving and glittering.

SUNDAY APRIL 14 (OMITTED)

Went DULL AND WET--THREATENING. At Bonnières and Bouquemaison French troops in reserve all over the place. St Bouge the town major said to fair-haired captain "I can give you no billet in this area. They're all reserved." "What shall I do?" "Jump into the next and jolt the town major there." "I can't find units which had moved." Sft. bike and read. Evg cinema.

APRIL 16 1918 TUESDAY

To KQ. Wrote. Unsettling rumours again. Whizzbangs. WEDNESDAY APRIL 17 1918. DULL AND COLD.

On night duty. Jonah Out. I waited. I a run at 7.45, and only just completed my bike cleaning in time for clean-bike parade. My bike dubious. y scanned by O.C. Seward cussed because he spoilt the whole parade by having bike unclean. He had to do it again for 5.30. Depressing dull drizzly weather. In my diary I say BAILLEUL. I suppose this means we heard that Bailleul was taken on this day. A to bed at 9. Slept well.

THURSDAY APRIL 18 1918.

FRIDAY APRIL 19 1918.

SHOWERS OF FINE SNOW AND VERY COLD. Evg delayed getting stuff from Doullens and Frevent for Kemp and O.Cs. Kemp wanted a French socialist paper. Broke spring. In dark, after straying had tyre burst. back 10.30.

SATURDAY APRIL 20 1918.

Morning, cold and fine. Back from Continental at 2.30. Aft repairs. Evg. fixed rubber block gadget as there were no spare springs at Corps.

SUNDAY APRIL 21 1918.

Rose at 7.30. A quiet day. Worked on tyre. Aft. D. Evg Elise and wrote after wasting time spec.

MONDAY APRIL 22 1918

Duggy was now at Doullens, having given up his bed to Vic. He was living with Baker I think in a side street on the right as you go into Doullens and having a good time with girls there. The sig office in Doullens in the big postal or town hall where up big steps in a tree court you went left into large room partitioned off with wood, with the usual clerks sitting at wood counters, smoking and taking everything in unemotional routine way.

Arriving home 12 found "There's something for you to read in the Mail," said Charley White. My special D.R. article in. I thought it would be the "Signals" article. The boys glad. I got copies of the Parisian edition next day for them from the little shop on the corner.

By this time we had shifted our mess from the school, because we were told Herlincourt was now out of our area. We had taken up in an estaminet opp. Clive Shed. A birght dark-eyed little proprietress bullied by a fat dirty woman whom we didnt like, who wanted to damp out our fie all day and sweep us off our feet while she cleaned. Tubby swcre aloud at her in English. "Yes, and d'ye know what I'd like to do with you you wold bitch put yer 'ead in the oven and shut the door." This esatminet, you entered a square room like a hall with an open fireplace where we cooked our eggs in fat and bacon in the morn, and cho.pped up and prepared our food. Behind this a scullery and big farmyard. To the left of ia livingroom of the civils. On right the estaminet room where we dined, and where men came in to drinl Perhaps the old gell thought we sent away custom. At night, cards, and at 9 a big supper of stew ot remainders. Delicuous to gather there after or before runs scoffing supper.

To-night, cinema and the lighting lorry put the light out every 1/2 hour. On night duty. Pleasing moonlight ride.

APRIL 23 TUESDAY 1918.

Mist this morning. Cleaned bike. Aft wrote "War roads."

APRIL 24 1918 WEDNESDAY.

Blanket and bath parade at 9. We used to bathe here once ot twice a week. Going to parade, Higgins told me my "Estaminet" article was in the Mail. Delighted. They all looked at my paper, slipping it out of wrapper befire I got it. Lilley greeted me with "Hello, Estaminet King now." Delighted. Motn and aft, spurred, wrote.

APRIL 25 1918 THURSDAY

This day we heard of the Zeebrugge and Ostend naval operations.

FRIDAY APRIL 26 '18.

Got Royle and Seward and Jonah and others: copies of the article s. Worked as usual. Wt misty and dull.

SATURDAY APRIL 27 1918

We got paid to-day, and I late on parade at 2.30. Evg. "Stars" good, but ha ve forgotten the.

SUNDAY APRIL 28 1918.

Worked on Ypres article and finished fair copy on the bench in Clive shed. Evg. wind up re run to GHQ. the driver of the Colonel's car saying he understood there would be a special there with something the Colonel had left behind., but to Doullens inste ad in the dark. Head loose and hit a brick and wobbled badly coming off.

MONDAY APRIL 29 1918.

Rose 7.15. Continental. Aft worked on bike and spoke to Mr. U re articles, arranging to slip them on his table. He said he didnt mind putting them thro for me. Evg to cinema.

On SUNDAY Garry had gone with special to Mont Noir. Visited old haunts and brought tales. Steenvoorde, Abeel and Westoutre and Boescepe under shell fire.

MONDAY APRIL 30

MAY 1,2,3,4 , TUES WED THURS FRIDAY 1918.

Ordinary. Weather wet. Got overall pants at last in postponed clothing parade, passing to a tent where Quarter and Roscoe handed us our due. Wrote "DRing in Ypres" and "F.V." and despd on 4-5-18.

May 4 SAT AND SUNDAY MAY 5 ~~and~~ 1918

THE SAME FINE AT INTERVALS.

MONDAY MAY 6 1918.

Slept in signal hut. Morn bike. Aft waiting man and wrote "Eve out Her" under the eyes of Nocholas who with cynical indifference noted. No rumours exc pt about M O V I N G. This night First Army took us from third, and it transpired gradually the we hsd been definitely put hon reserve and worked a reserve area.

TUESDAY MAY 7 1918.

Rose 7.15. Heavy downpour night and morn. Wrote. To Directional Sireless station on Continental, turn left before Bouque maison and over filed ruts to Mill where in a few tents by a lorry and box car, was the camp.

Rode to Doullens without lamp. High psirits.

WEDNESDAY MAY 8 1918.

FINE. After waiting all morn at twelve alled into TOPO section This room was upholstered with maps on slanting and straight easels. It showed the war area and on the German side of ia were flags stuck in at various spots were flags representing German Divisions, and marked new, fresh, rested tired, according as these divs were so reckoned by our intelligence. These were added up in figures by the side, as, fresh 37, tired 57 and so on.