

defended our Intelligence Dept. as something highly efficient, modest, omniscient. Would we take part in a debate? Brought and sent word that Anz c orderlies, Murray, Salmon, Bromfield, and Gay, to depart. Pathos of their departure down to Somme, rejoin their battn. Result, Jim Murray, cheerful and stoic, cleaning up and sewing buttons instead of going to Cinema.

(At Abeele jim got badly drunk. It appears, when he once gets on the booze, blotto, he gets wild and has to be locked up. So that's why he refused to go in an estaminet the only time I asked him.)

TUESDAY  
DEC 5

Tossed, and won the car. At 11 re car. My luck. So vent off with the old load up on bike, 24 from For. and Kruisstraat. Then met car in Ypres. Cussed. Wrote reports, despatched, and just back by dusk. Jim's laugh greeted me, there, and I tried to get a pair of boots for him and succeeded. He had arrived at Abeele in afternoon, just missing train to take him to rejoin. That night he got canned.

On a previous afternoon, as was in my hut, was called to Signal Office mess hut to meet a bowed-down 40 year old, greying light haired Hants man, with yokel utterance and dribbling lips. He had been told to report to Cpl. Davis for orderly duty. They gave him tea and I sent him down to Dupont's. After doubt, comparing with other orderlies, Jim Buckley, Deering, I had decided, against Caseby's advice and much against appearances, to keep this man with us at Dupont's in Jim's place for cook. I did this because I didn't like to force on Cooper, who was decent, the worst of the bunch. Caseby said, the others hinted that "Pa" was chatty, and no pity was shown. However, this uncertain one began by cleaning sink and dixies. Caseby much astonished and already began to turn round. "Pa" said he had two certificates as army cook. I think he was a liar. Jim Murray, half reluctant and uncertain, went with me to cinema and pierrots. Spr with Jim, rather melancholy and sentimental to-night was a subtle study almost girlish in susceptibilities. Hunter gone, and to bed by myself at 10, after writing this. Thought much about losses and how to avoid same by regular shifts.

WED  
DEC 6

Via Abeel, Boeschepe, Berthen and the curling roads therethrough to St. Jan's Cappel, and Bailleul for a lost bird. Sergt. Colle out, but got the bird by enquiring at Signal office then opposite, 9th Corps. (On arriving in Square from St. Jan's cappel Road, on right corner was hotel de ville and there the 2nd Anzsc Corps H.Q. with D.R.s's shop where I met Francis, I believe. Turning left was Signal Office of ICO and the left opposite. Further on down, with green wood shutters against cream walls, was Jeanne's famous fruit-shop and mess that the 2nd Corps boys used to have. I had promised Wagstaff and others of BCO to call and I did so. Jeanne, plump, well-favoured, 40 greeted me heartily, and prepared dinner of brussels sprouts and meat and squids and beer. While it was cooking I went round to ICO mess-room---a schoolroom in convent behind little passage and square on St. Jan's Cappel. Road as you came up hill. Warm and comfy in there after greay ride and Bailleul pave. Saw Moses and gibbons (first time since England). They well in with Corps and made me welcome and invited me to dine from good rissoles and veges. The room stood up. On the benches overalls and haversacks and tubes and tool bags. Chap who had Primus to sell, but it was coming on by post or something.

At dinner Jeanne shiwed me the BCO souvenir, the old roster with the white round checks hanging up and the names of the old boys and some photos. She would never forget them and "Waggy". Left 91, got stove, for 30 francs, and home to Corps, where I met Jim Jim again and got him a pair of boots. (I was in error in saying it was the day before that I got Jim his boots at Abeele. This was the night Jim got canned. Shook hands parting tenderly with Jim. Evg. business at W.S.C's. Primus working. Bed at 10.

#### THURSDAY

DEC 7 Case with Cor. Roads greasy. In papers learnt with sorrow and shame of Asquith's resignation and the baiting by Daily Mail, whihc calls Haldane, Grey, Asquith and Balfour, "Gang of wirepullers."

Wulsty argued at tea for second time that Daily Mail was right.

Undoubtedly the Mail has substantial following in the army. Evg. bath and wrote.

MENTION, gradual change of feeling as I got rid of the old feeling of apprehension bred on the Somme and now began to feel at home in the Sa lietnt. At first feared the Salient would be the same, and that fierce doings might at any moments ensue, or we might again be spirited down away to some rotten front. Slowly this feeling changed to one of security

--never quite sure, hvr.

144

Always there was a dread of what might be done to you--transferred to some rotter unit or front. When we had more divisions we had more D.Rs, and then there was wind up because those nicely fixed with us did not want to go back to ~~div~~ base.

DEC 8

WEDNESDAY  
1916

Felt shame and gloom at Daily Mail's dastardly and insidious attacks on Asquith, Gray, and "Haldane gang", as D.M. calls them. The fall of Asquith's govt. seems to me a catastrophe. Asquith's dignified vindication re Lloyd George's proposed War Council.

SAT  
DEC 9

Cleaned and overhauled bike all day in drizzle, heard of Crosby coming back with load and tale re Smith and birds lost up in mist. To-day up with car in damp day. Hilton enigmatic. To Hraiss-treat twice. Aft. wrote reports by fire. Far new cook, unpromising at first, cleans dixies and floors and gets good meals. I a conscienceless wangler down at the Town Major's ration dump, wangling rations and timber and coal with the innocent face of an imbecile, and then tipping us the wink. "Wal, i' ye darn look after yerself --its--its-sez-sez--itsez no-body else a'nt a-going to. Sin I bin in th'army I learnt to look arter myself likr an olr sweat." To-night, first time in army, severe pain in intestines. Made me sweat and groan for a minute or two. Indigestion?

SUND  
DEC 10.

Was it owing to Pip's birthday spread of two puddings, champagne and cake?

To Hallebast Corner with birds, and got pars from Smith and back to Brigade resting at Zevacoten, where I saw Spicer, the tall worried Brigade Orderly, dark, lank, whom I never quite trusted. In the Signal Office, telphoning to and fro by sergts and corporals, they had tried to get the figures, but from Spicer I got the facts as to wrong releasing--during taking over and relief. Back too late for suggested report to C. c. on losses. Evening, band and cinema, but before close, W.C. and suffered all evening.

MONDAY  
DEC 11

Pay had been dished out while trying to get Mr. U, Mr Cumberland rang up. I late, after promising would be up in half hour, and met Mr. Cumberland coming out of Signal Camp gate. He, graying, back and paid me. I felt he had pieced thro' my playsibility. To Brigade H.Q. then to Hallebast Corner, and explained to Hutton. Saw Mr. Buchanan at Zevacoten, very tall officer know-all Scotch officer, who resented my knowing also my business. I suggested that Spicer ought to be left alone to pigeons, and he told me off. Evening long telephone message from Mr. U.

TU 1 DAY  
C 12

Heavy sleet all morning. Wrote reports. Aft. to signal office and on bike. Evg. wrote.

NOTE: Again TOTAL CHANGE OF PUBLIC FEELING at news of fall of Bucharest. One feels again---Is Germany going to win after all? Remember the tides of feeling that have swayed us since war started.

Typical English army way of joking of officers over any deed, matter of fact or important.

CURTAIN/ND:

"I was just settling down for the night with a novel, when some awful devil poked his head in and said: "What about pay?"

"Pay? I'd forgotten all about the bloody pay."

Then at Brielen in sig. C there: "He got 10 days leave in order to get married. "Well, what kind o' time did ye'ave?" "Oh, when I got there I changed my bloody mind." "His girl had been playing the game. I should have done the same. I could have found an odd knee for 3."

Off, as car not coming (so phoned Sergt. E.) to Ramparts by bike. Belt rim pulled out again. Left bike in stable of 55 Divisional Supply column, where men were busy amid harness and horses in huts alongside road, and got long awaited lift to V lam and then by side-car to the Lille Road turning off at Cloth Hall Sq. Walked to Aviary. Walked back to Vlam., and thence got lift in Flying Corps box car to Pop. (They don't half whizz.)

WED  
DEC 13

THURSDAY

DEC 14

Aft. wrote report. Evg. wrote and read. Next morning hailed by Skinner in box car. He was newly rigged. During long tel. conver. with Mr. U, during which I was in my nightgear as I had got up from bed, I had insisted Skinner was the best man to relieve Archer at Ramparts. "Why not Buckley or Deering?" "Not pigeon men and not the intelligence of Skinner." I believed in Skinner, because such a nice modest scholar and he was son of a past President of London Federation of Pigeon Clubs, and had been so modest as never to tell me and never to come scrounging round for a cushy job as orderly like some of the men had done. So I chose him believing in my own flair for character. Archer was to be recalled now or was it for Jack Hilton's leave? Whipped Skinner up to Ramparts and coming back got my bike on car and down to Corps with it for new wheel. No spare wheels, Sergt. gone to Corps Supply Column for same.

FRIDAY  
DEC 15

Caseby to Corps for inoculation. In doubt how to get pigeons up if army car didn't come, asked him as asj officer to let us have

k

146

for box car. He phoned down and this arrived. Down to Debyses and Cassiers and back to Tillie's for 8 extra birds. Here Army car was, it having been detained by trees on the move on main road from Wimezecele (?). But I shared their work. A f---up. Caseby in bed. Took wheel out and washed it and took it down to Corps on Caseby's bike--a sod to start.

SAT  
DEC 16  
SUNDAY  
DEC 17

Caseby still ill so took his run. He met Fr. Y. and had instructions re string on that bird, and re Wright. Aft. wrote and evg to cinema.

MONDAY  
DEC 18

Morning wrote business and Mr. Underwood came. (Dirty mats were outside and my hair touzeled but we were working.) Discussed Service and S.C. discussed. Satisfactory. Aft. wrote and evg. to cinema (V.C.).

DEC 19  
TUESDAY

Waited with Jock Campbell, second army D.R. at Pop. S.C. for our car so as to take him on run to Ypres, but car never turned up. Till 11, when we had very cold run. (Turned up just as Jock and I went off). Aft. to Corps, saw Mr. U and ?obile loft. Glennie had done my bike and I ran back through the snow with clutch and gears running sweetly. Wrote all evening.

Dec 20  
WED.

Up to Hallebast corner by bike, tho' bike ran well. Aft. instructed two pigeon men tho' dog-tired. Evening wrote, fetched rum from Town Major's, and wrote.

(The tame lion which they haf at Town Major's--regimental mascot which was lost, rolling about in the back room there.)

THURSDAY  
DEC 21

With car to ramparts, Ypres, with Jock Campbell and Anzac and Tom Cavill. Rainy and cold. Skinner came back to Pop talking books. How in the Ra, parts one wanted a lively book, not the Russian novelists. Aft. wrote--head tired. Evg., R.E.

Band, fine. Caseby to H.E said M.P's stopped his bike. He furious told the tale abt. pigeons. Staff sergt. then stopped him, Staff procession and Sor Dougl's Haig. What might this portend? Caseby to Hallebast corner. Wrote business and letter. Evg. bathed and wrote.

FRIDAY  
DEC 22  
DEC 23

To Hallebast corner. Great windstorm. Just before I reached the Railway crossing on Keninghelst road, the niveau "poutre" had fallen and felled a man, who was just being taken away in lorry.

Casby not away when I returned, so I went with him to Ramparts, leaving Sergt. Hiscocks behind us, who talked . . . and I talked. . . After tea, quarrel with Cas by over signing Acquittance Rolls for pay, because we met in traffic and I didn't wait long enough for him. His job to come after pay not mine to chase him. Cursed mutually. Evg. Talbot House concert. Faint attempts to be funny, but there was one funny Scotchman.

Have received Xmas cards from W.C.P., Mober, rd Adl. Horn to Corporal Cavill's leave. Lifted Mobile birds. Then at 11.30 to Ramparts. Skinner and Archer well. Birds doing well. At 1 o'clock at Krusstruet, outside world's end inn, a structure. Saw Edmonds. Evans in estaminet and away at 3. Home late. Before going to Corps another row with Casby over W.C. door. Left open. "I'll stop it up. GHastly smell. I'm digging myself a hole at the end of the garden. I'll board it up. Why the hell---." Lost temper. Liar. Thought over it much. Evening to cinema and ~~Ramparts~~ concert party, civvies invited, at Pop. Signl Office. Xmas spirit in air. Canteen decorated. Peace in the air with the proposals of Germany and Pres. Wilson.

Morn, I late waiting on phone for 2nd army car. Casby with car to Ramparts and I on bike to Hallebast corner. Aft. mended tyre, while Martha dressed up, passed with her mother in the passage-lane side of loft. Then to Corps in time for 4.30 evening spread at Zilma's cottagr shop, main road Fboels. Decorated Xmas trimming. Sup, 2 turkies, cold roast, peas, spuds, sprouts and spuds, plum pudding coffee.

I broke plate and food dropped on floor. "Give him his meeny back" howled Charley white. "A nice ruse, sd Bill Wilson. "The first man for 2 servings. White: "Jeune homme, vous devez etre pruden." Remember--Williams. Wilson: "He joined the Flying Corps. Swank. As I rode up Tara Hill. a szell burst 2 yards behind. I flung my bike to the ditch. . . We were looking for souvenirs in the trenches when all of a sudden snip, snip, and three bally Huns. . .

White: "How I won the V.C.

Wilson: "All they found was his pay-book.

White: "The great Advance---three miles in 3 years.

Davies comes in at six to have his dinner before taking an O.O.

(operation order) handed out at two o'clock!

Hallo-ah.. Fatewell for evah-moah'. ALGY

XMAS  
1916

XMAS  
1916

To the San Martin and drank and sang. Pip--"Bogey, bogey, Eat my knox." The last thing one thought about was war. War-dance in billet. Macmara's Band. White and Wilson in celebrated condensed milk-tin skeach. Davis pirowting about with match-stalk legs. Lee writing letter to wife in the corner. Home 9 p.m. My birthday. Wrote Missing Bird report for C.C. 23rd Division. Aft. on bike and various business calls. Evg. Cin.

DEC 26  
1919.

DEC 27  
WED

Day fair. Casaby inoculated for second time. To car. After dinner to Ypres Ramparts with cargo on bike. Beautiful day. Back thro' sunset to tea. Evg. wrote.

DEC 27  
THURSDAY

Casaby had is. day after inoculation. Morn 10.30 to Ypres Ramparts with cargo by bike. In Ypres called at cellar dugout of 8th Corps D.Rs in Rue au beurre, near Cloth Hall. There was Sergt. Finnemore within (brother of the S.M at Dunstable) and two or three others, one Scotch who used to call on Caseby. They were making tea and made me stay for a mug, apologizing because there was no rum. You went in earthy-smelling passage with shattered roof, turned right down the cellar steps, and there was a big acetylene lamp going in the cellar. They had built a kind of oven fire-place under the chimney leading same up through floor to chimney breast of ground floor. The boys had been sent up here to do navywork because they had appeared on parade at some high officer's inspection not particularly clean, in dress. Fox of second army had been put on a similar job. He had been invited to a Belgian soldier's home-coming on leave, and was stepping out of the door when he collided with a staff-officer who said Fox was drunk. A trila ensude. Conviced.

Put in the San Joseph at Cassel, he simply broke the door down and walked out till they fetched him again. Here I am, Fox, never was drunk, and am not going into clink for what didn't commit. So they stripped him and put him in the Camp and at Ypres on fatigues, but were annoyed because he was always clean and dapper and they couldn't break his spirit. Home via Cpl. Evans. Dinner 7.30. At 2 to Corps, got belt and outer cover and other jobs done. Drenk champagne to health of Roberts' leave at Mobile Loft. Pip Boyd also. To tea at billet and wrote.

29-12-16

Wet morni g. Car. Jock at last moment wanted to go, but her had been preparing all morning not to go, airing his inoculation complaints, in case didn't come the car. So I took him at word and

Afternoon wrote reports and at 4 met Pybus scorching down the road with great load of covers and carriers on his bike. He with 41 Div. Asked him to tea. His talk of his lazy D.R.s imposing on him --would expect him to take down their engines and decarbonize-- would put their engines on his door-step. "They're no mechanics, half of 'em--would hit nails with a copper hammer till there's no decent face on it, a--had to lock it up. Would file solder off and f---- up the file. Come and laid their broken springs outside the garage door--took down a slatch and didn't know how to put it up again--lay on a gear to clean it up and laid on the crankcase. My God, what a crew of screwdrivers and misfits."

DEC 30  
SAT

I had arranged to go to Piccadilly, so left him impatiently him off with Pybus. Got late and had to stand <sup>gauge by</sup> up. Mag., wrote and was called to telephone by Mr. U. Just missed second call and repaired my roof with felt, old Moss at last turning out decent and advising me how to nail it with slats of wood over the crossbeams. man Aft. wrote in comfy billet and then round on work. Reports at hut. Early tea. Bathed and wrote comfy. Bat kept coughing during the night.

SUNDAY  
DEC 31

Morning--Was I well enough to get up? Got up and did biz. till 9.30. Walked down. Jock rose at 10. Sft. felt dizzy and bones ached. Sergt. Edmunds asked for working strength list. I rather heated, said how busy I had been. Won't Jock help? said he. "He's rather unwilling," I sd. Just then Jock came in. However, Jock did the list. afternoon, long argument on religion. Evg. was feeling shuddery, cilled and rotten. At Town Major's Sergt. kindly gave me rum. I "got down to it". The rum made me warm and bemused. Little sleep because always coughing altho' I laid down s

NEW YEAR'S  
DAY 1917

So tired and drowsy. Toroughly bad with influenza. Kept bed. At 11 Jock came in about a row he'd had with dad, the cook. Dad came in at 3 and told me of row with Jock. Chaos in the mess as soon as I was not there. C aseby had threatened to get his own back on Dad if ver C came out as officer. D d told him to go and ---- himself and do his own cooking. No sleep this night because of pain in hips, and because next door in War's hut, just as I was dropping off the debaters in raucous voices began their nightly debate with the new Jewish cook on Socialism. The New Year was ushered in by Moss and Co walkijg about with drums made of bisc it tins, kettle drums of frying pans, etc. Awful din.