

FRIDAY

2-2-17. All day cleaning up billet. Evg. to cinema and revue, 55 Div.

3-2-17 With Caseby with birds and back. Aft. off to Corps to see

SAT

O.C. Pigeons. A nipe puncture at start. Evg. with Pip.

4-2-17

SUNDAY

Dad, our cook, ill in bed in the little closet room where he was banished on first arriving because they thought he was chatty from up the line. All worked heartily on sprucing the billet, Cavil, Caseby, Deering, Skinner. I on bike-work. Aft. wrote, rations, and bike. Evg. I saw the Somme film, which I found rather monotonous.

5-2-17

MONDAY

Self took two cargoes of birds to Ramparts on bike. Caseby to H.C. At 2 returning met Sargt with car, so got stores up. Aft reports,

6-2-17

TUESDAY

Tea out. Evg. wandered about and tea in Marie's. In morning cleaned billet and men ded vloches. Started on stove at S.O. hut. Left samt at 1. At 2 returned with stoveplate found at Du, ont's with intent to go to Dent 1 Hospital at Corps. but Galligan kindly helped me to fit stove. Finished sawing and plate and wiring pipe by 4.45. Burnt well after smoking badly.

Fuel hunt. Meant to spend long evening reading by stove, but same went out. 2 bombs fell near. Relit stove. Wrote till 10 at letters, etc. Cold frost freezier than ever. Scoured floor greezes.

7-2-17

WED.

Caseby with car to Ramparts. Shell fell few yards from car on the Brielen road. To Canadian Hospital for dental plate. To cinema with

8-2-17

THURSDAY

David Hunter. Argued with Caseby as to H.C. run but as he had puncture, I went after first deciding otherwise. Two punctures. Evg to Tivolies.

9-2-17.

FRIDAY

With car to Ramparts. Things lively up there. Back and did reports. At S.O. saw and said feeling farewell to Couper who was being moved to Corby. To Corps and saw O.C. Asked C.Q.M.S if he had a reserve of Aluminium clips. He turned his back on me.

SAT

"What have you done with the others? The divisions are asking me for clips." Presents. San Martin Evening. Home by nice ride. Still damned cold.

10-2-17.

Caseby to H.C. with talk of lost birds and depleted stock at divs. Aft. to Corps, trying to get coal from the house beside the station. I dodgin M.P.s as it is supposed to be illegal for soldiers to buy coal, tho' they pinch it right and left.

11-2-17

SUNDAY

This evg. thaw gentle but firm. San Martin night. Morn, Caseby to Ypres with birds. I to H.C. Aft. Sergt Edmonds arrives and argues in the mess when I want to get on with work.

New Sergt. Barnes, arrives in place of Couper. Decent fluent affable sort. Cockney. Aft reports. Evg. cin and gd band.

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12-2-17  
MONDAY  
13-2-17  
TUESDAY

New class arrives up to 10.30. Class. Aft. rations and miscellaneous work. It was tonight I met Fry re submarine-anti invents. Morn, car came unexpectedly while I was adjusting bike. After indecision, I took the turn, Caseby only half offering. Back late via Brielen and Elverdinghe. Was this the time I went and saw the Berkhepstead chap who with his mate got gassed at the Elverdinghe left? Belgian Frontier and sentry. All so casual and unimportant and holidayish. Down to school re rations and questions. Caseby said S.M. wrote me on phone at S.C. Cdn't get hi him, so Caseby going to Coms to news. ex birds, Mobile moving and Skinner's birds. Waited about till 5.40 for S.M. Bike awkward. Compressor for last time in dark searched for. After late empty tea and cancelled what drive at Talbot House, row with Caseby re Coal, small share of, I was taking for my stove from store in second kitchen. He was annoyed because I told him he was not a "sport." Going past the estaminet on the right. A dru drunk lay out on the footpath. UI carrying coal and stove-pipe which had scrounged on car, didn't know what to do, and after some suasion left him to fate in the dark across the footpath. Fair evg. but slight troubles with light and fire in hut. Tried to cook Machonochie in tin without first puncturing. Tin bursting. Taste tinny. Army way.

Coal  
quarrel  
fast and  
only time  
now, not  
before

WED  
14-2-17

Capt Mudge, meeting Caseby down at Corps, arranged with Caseby to look out side for Mobile No. 5 near Heavies at Brandhoek. He pluming himself on this, and suspecting me trivially annoyed, which I slightly was, but still I recognise d this was one of the jobs he could do well. He knew Capt Mudge thro' seeing him abt. <sup>observations</sup> commission. Aft he takes ~~Mobilization~~ Brandhoek as arranged. I finished class by early aft. Evg. back to S.C. instead of to estaminet of Hughie. Pigeon men's secret haunts in Pop.. I expected a wire and I missed Talbot house cinema. Caseby's a/c of Heavy officersm who knew nothing abt. proposed pigeon loft installstion. Nive major who was mildly horrified, accdg to C. at first two proposals of position because of Fritz' balloon observation.

THURS  
FEB 15

Caseby to site near Heavies (opposite Signal office on field reached over ditch on right.) I to Ypres. Between Dickebusch or K and Ypres by the Ambulance station left, we heard "plonks" of shrapnel in front. In distance saw men running with horses toward us and away over fields. "Shall we gon on?"

We did. There had been six direct hits on road, between which we swerved. House on the left holed. The field right, churned up. Would the car hold the road and get past safely. Safely rushed the length of road. Nothing came till after we'd gone. Then quiet. Evening to Hughie's estaminet. Dark handsome lady of the est. and thin superior servant girl danced mildly with clients. Decent exponents of the art.

16-2-17  
FRIDAY

Caseby took on himself the extra run that day to Ramparts. I to Corps meeting unexpectedly Mr. U. Talked. Bath and pork dinner. The waiting about in the dark sinister room with diners. The going to and fro of servants. The dark young girl in the passage and the intervention of the gilded brasshat. Tank mended in vain at Corps--still leaking.

STEEN  
VORDE.  
17-2-17  
SAT

Caseby to Ramparts. I sawed tough wood and chopped--some task. Cleared garden of filth, etc. Aft. pay parade all aft. Evening "Cheero", Revue at 55 Div. Theatre, Pop Station. Good sleeps after reading "Arminel" as nightcap.

SUNDAY  
18-2-17.

Morn checked lists. Afternoon, wind up at the camp over threatened visit of Sanitary officer--no cover to latrine seat or something or other and incinerator bad. Assisted in cleaning up camp--getting tins and paper and boxes out of hedge. Also bike. Late for cinema. Had to go back for two stachels left in S.O. Late

MONDAY  
19-2-17.  
TUESDAY  
20-2-17

but good sea. Misy night. I up with birds in car. Things quiet. Aft. work. Evg Tivolies. This morning, re 2 runs to H. C., as argued by Caseby, a row with him.

"You make a certain arrangement," I said, "about the Ypres runs, and now Ypres's getting warm again, you want to change it to your own advantage, so that you shall get fewer Ypres runs. Just like you. But I'm not having any this time."

"You're a bloody liar," he said.

"If anybod's a bloody liar, it's you," I said. "You're the biggest I've met. But that's one thing I don't do. If you call me a bloody liar again I'll hit you one, big as you are."

"You are one, all the same."

I hit him in the face.

He sprang at me and we wrestled to the danger of our heads against the big square cornered kitchen stove-range.

Tom Cavil speared us.

I offered Caseby out.

He would wait till he had washed. After washing he went on messing with his boots.

"Are you coming out to have it out?" I asked, hoping he would refuse, my impulse cooling a little.

20/1/17  
"I'm coming when I've finished my boots and cleaned ma teeth." He was quiet and bent with red face over his boots as he spoke.

I took off my tunic, and Tom Cavil laughed to see me in my tight navy jersey. Caseby had to come out as the others were waiting, Tom as Judge.

To my surprise, the first round was mine. Caseby whirled his fists about fiercely but roundabout, while I practised the only thing I know---hit straight and hard with the left and trust to my reach, which I knew was fairly long from the one or two bouts I had had in the hut at Dunstable.

"I got it that time, Hughie," said Caseby turning to Wright.

"I can't see."

One of his eyes was closing where I had socked it. A slight spasm of pity crossed lightning-like through my mind that a man so big as he should be so humiliated as to stand there with a bunged-up eye and appeal for sympathy to the onlookers.

"My fingers are all chapped," said he coming forward to the second round.

"That's absurd---"

I had just said it, thinking he was going to argue out, when, with a gleam of hate in his <sup>one</sup> eye, he rushed at me and hit me a crack on the head that made my senses spin.

"You dirty cad," I thought. "I wasn't ready."

A severe blow in my eye quenched my rising rage at his lack of sportsmanship, and my early exultant feeling of unsuspected power and conquest gave way to a feeling of misery and hurt and self-doubting. I wished that somehow the fight could stop. My thumbs were knocked up on his hard head and they pained me.

While we paused for third round I asked him to apologize for calling me a liar. He wouldn't and I rather admired him for that. He kept on refusing, so with grave misgivings I asked him to "Come on, then."

This time I hammered him terrifically on the head as he made a turn.

"I'm fed up," he said. "You've got the best of it."

"Right, that's enough," I said as hastily as I dare, glad to get out of it so well. "As long as you give me 'best man.' If I can't have it verbally that you're wrong, I've got it physically. Don't you call me a bloody liar again..."

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"By C----you made me laugh, dancing round in that little navy jersey o' yours," said Tom. "If y.u could ha' seen yourself on the lawn--ye did look a comic."

So much for the dignity of victory.

I felt sorry for Caseby's humiliation and tried to help him with his puncture but he was sulky. All morning at Signal Office trying to get Hilton through to me re returns. In vain.

Owing to my batterede eye, the fact of the conflict leaked out, and jokes went round as to my pugilistic leanings. Aft., in rain, after wondering what to do, went the whole triple round, Jock having taken Pop. birds to Ramparts. Home too late for Cinema.

WED  
FEB22

At Corps in afternoon, had to tell the tale of the fight as the news had got round. When Sergt. Edmonds came Caseby was going to the car, and kept his face averted, but Sergt spotted it, and Caseby had to admit he'd got the worst of it. I didn't like to appear to be trying to get behind Caseby's back to Sergt.

Barnes, who appeared to like Caseby, but I had to explain that he had never been a sport, and this had gradually led up to our quarrel and fight. Caseby, being a good hand at cracking a joke, and taking no work seriously so that he never had to find fault or put anybody right, had a big pull in this way and sought and got a certain popularity with those who didn't know him well.

When Wolsty came in, a favourite of Caseby's, W. pulled C.'s leg about keep the back of his head to him. I laughed and went out out so as not to make matters more humiliating. Soon everybody in the service knew and came to take a peep at C. And when his special Scotch chum from the 8th Corps came to see him, it was the climax of bitterness for C. who must have hated me. I thought to myself, if he gets his commission and comes out here and ever gets over me, he'll have it out of me and lead me a dog's life. However, he was extraordinarily quiet. His loud laughter and joking and bluffing and boasting were now no more heard in the land. Nothing in the world had ever so much quelled C. as that fight.

Aft. to Corps too late for thorough mending of tank Evg. at San Martin. Eileen again.

THURS  
22-2-17

To H.C. in mist and drab wet. Aft to Corps for tube and requirements for push bikes of left orderlies. Evg to T.H. abd debate at S.O. with Mark Hebden leading. The fierce unreasoning democrat type in rancour and uncompromising hostility to C.

FRIDAY  
FEB 23 '17 Morning in cold mist with car and birds to ramparts.  
To Mobile with boxes and baskets and bike to Corps. Aft. reports  
and rations.

SATURDAY FEB 24 1917. Evg to Tivolies.

SUNDAY  
FEB 25 '17 Morn to H.C. Aft. cleaned and repaired bike.

To Corps re lost Mobile stock and report to C.O. Trewartha's  
birds kept coming back from Brandhoek. I had the wind up. Caseby  
tried to catch same with corn and box. The cook at A.S.C hut got  
a couple by feeding them with rice. I enquired at the "Pigeon  
Rapide" and at the chateau Loft, and elsewhere, and at Belgain  
office, where they were amiable but impenetrable.

MONDAY. Wrote mother. Had told Barnes full up with work. To Ram-  
FEB 26 parts with birds. Aft. to C.Q.M.S. for stationery and  
clothes. He was up by the D.Rs and he hated them like poison  
because he reckoned they wangled and pinched stuff. But Bruce  
here was good and stuck up for them. Once after batteries and  
carbide lamps had disappeared from store he had the D.R.s room

illegally searched. Pip gave me one lamp to get it out of the way.

The boys used to envy the way I got clothes for the pigeon men.  
Tea with pip and got two strays from "Pigeon Rapide" and took them  
home to my hut. At 10.10 p.m. met Paul coming into Corps Signal  
office. He had left Canadians and was at second army with Billy  
Pritchard.

"Hello, Frowster, why so quiet entering?" I said.

"I am quieter," he said. "Different runs and rotten bike."  
He was sadder, more subdued than he used to be. I was gayer.

TUESDAY After seeing Caseby and Sergt. off I decarbonised at  
27-2-17 Signal Office. Pop. Finished at 5.30 and to Corps for  
tea. In time at 6. Quiet San Martin. Home at 9.30.

WEDNESDAY: To Corps and Mr. U. 39th Div and my careless words to  
FEB 28 '17. C.As I skated skidding on pave film wondered how it