

2-1-17

Pain went and I felt sleepy. So decided at 7.30 to remain in bed. Jock Campbell brought me a breakfast and chatted with unsuspected amiability. Foster, the lugubrious, full always of mournful prophecies of England's downfall--what do ye think of this, pointing out extract in the Times which he had regly sent out to him---he brought me a dinner. Jock again brought tea. Just as I was dressing off Calligan came in.

"You mustn't think I forgot ye," he said. "All the camp's t'inkin' on ye--but Jock took it on to see to ye, and it a one-man job---now id there anything I can do?"

"I never felt till to-day how much I am one of the camp,"

I said. "You know I've always felt I must have appeared a bit awkward, after having to quarrel t the very first. But you know I felt I must stand up to Roberts from the first, I had been warned against him, and tho' I'd sooner face shells than quarrel with a man, I felt I was right in this case."

"So ye were. Ye di well. Now ye mustn't thin we forgot ye. It was just a one-man job and I've been out wiring..." ad infinitum.

He insisted on making me a splendid cup of coffee.

3-1-17

No sleep, too hot and twisted and sore.

Rose, tho' queer, after mug of tea from Calligan. Everybody nice and glsd to see me back. Morning taught and afternoon ditto. Evening was the debate at Talbot House on the Daily Mail, I leading supported by Stanbridge. Felt queer at tea-time, but I won a very good debate that "Lord Northcliffe be strafed" by 33 to 31.

4-1-17

Mng. cleaned shelves at billet mess. Aft. reports and corrected papers. Got chit for man with bad leg called "Bandelowe". Next

5-1-17.

morning he to hospital but there (down at corner of Reninghelst Road,) couldn't find out any particulars about him. To Renghst up the Hallebast Road, skidded, came a frightful cropper, cut my hand badly and muddied it and self, bent bats and smashed lamp. Was picked up and led to estaminet off the road on left, where soldier broke his iodine bulb over hand and dressed it. Slatternly woman in farm serving coffee, verl kind. To destination with cargo. Going back, belt rim of rear wheel broke. First I left the bike in shed with genial Jocks at Camp on road near Ouderdom, then returned and wheeled bike back to Smith's as I had a new belt on, etc. Left same in coalshed of the loft. Thro' fine day walked it back, tired but glowing.

SAT

6<sup>1</sup>1-17

Morning up with bird by car. Aft. to Corps for new wheel. No e in stock. tea with Pip. First meeting with Eileen, who like a very young queen Victoria stood against the door post and received the raillery of the boys Sat in the Martin drinking. Coarse song by pte. Walked home tired but happy.

SUNDAY  
7-1-17.

Jock to Hospital re his teeth. I having no motor-bike and no car, push-biked it to Hallebast Corner. Beneath the dignity of A D.R. but didn't care so long as I got the goods delivered. Back late. Evg. band and cinema. with Skinner. The Morning Post and Titbits. Our arguments as to whether it was legal and right for men at home to strike. Also whether we ought to debase ourselves and do as the Huns did with gas and with bombing by aeroplane.

MONDAY  
8

*Water carts*  
I against. Majority for. I proposed pushbiking to Ypres, but Jock went to Corps and by asking Capt. Mudge for box car, O.C. went with him to Tiffy's shop and got a wheel. He to Hallebast corner, then he lped me with back wheel. I to Ramparts, Ypres, late. The streets were deserted and shrapnel, etc. was falling on the left. I left my bike against smashed church wall, and walked through shell holes and mud of path to Jack by the right side back way. The Huns had been "bumping" heavily that morning. An hour after I left, 22 were laid out up against our pigeon cote, men belonging to the water carts that stood there when I arrived. Jack the only one in the group not hjrt. The sentry to whom I spoke had his arm blown off. To Kruisstraat. Drank cafe. Home late.

TUESDAY  
JAN 9

Up to Hallebasst corner and the Ramparts, doing the two runs. Not so lively, but still some of the roads barred by debris. Away quick. To the Tivolies at night just past the squire, Pop.

WED  
JAN 10

*11/11/17*  
Jock went up with car. In the afternoon I was repairing bike and Skinner was writing out lists of birds in the lofts, when "Woo-oo---ineCrash." We had a look outside and saw an indeterminate black cloud above the roofs station direction. "Bang--who--Crang," about 18 shells, one every 5 minutes. It made me miserable and nervous, because we were next door to the second big Church in Pop. and it was such a mark for the guns, and you couldn't help thinking, he's bound to drop one here next. Every 1/2 hour some one would turn up from somewhere and say "Boeschepestrasse" or "The station", or the house on the corner Zeninghel Road." Though, really, they didn't know. Skinner continued his work apparently imperturbably, and earned my admiration.

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Hunter, who arrived yesterday again, took Hallebast corner run, and came back unmoved by the shelling. I went up to billet through streets deserted. M.P.s were diverting traffic to the switch road.

THURSDAY  
JAN 11 Hunter took H.C. run. I checked Loft lists, wondering if shell-  
ing would begin again. It gave a minister touch to life till you became thoroughly accustomed to the idea of it regularly. Aft.

FRIDAY  
JAN 12 wrote and for r tions.  
Car Came and I went to Pamparts and also took Jock's run to Hal-  
lebast corner as the car had to go to Reninghelst. Quiet prevailed. Aft. wrote 2 reports, and having headache (from wearing tin hat) slept 1 hour in hut. A great pigeon men's reunion in

SAT  
JAN 13 Dupont's in the evening. Wrote and read.  
Morning, bike and list of birds. Aft. to Corps. Evg. bath. Caseby to H.C. in pouring rain.

SUNDAY  
JAN 14 Caseby in car to Ypres Ramparts. I to H.C. and bringing back some returned birds, left bike outside while I saw Jack. Coming out, no bike. M.P. said, "I should try at the A.P.M.'s. I went in passage just up above and saw in the yard my bike. Two or three red nosed scrounging and earholing M.P.'s blocking up the passage and shuffling about. "The A.P.M. wants to see you".

I went in.

"Yes, I had your cycle brought here. You know very well you shouldn't leave a machine unattended and unobserved. We've had a lot of trouble lately with stolen cycles."

"Well, sir, I had to get those birds inside the loft, and I'd always left the machine there--there's nowhere else to put it."

"Don't argue. Why didn't you ask someone to keep an eye on it."

/ i saw an M.P there and thought it ud be alright."

"Did you mention it to the M.P.?"

"I did not, sir."

"He might be changing over."

"I'll be careful in future, sir."

"I shall take your unit and report the case."

A fussy rotten sod.

Aft. wrote reports, letters and this.

JAN 15  
MONDAY Repaired roof of hut with felt. Aft. reports mand signal office. The din in Signal Office with Campbell arguing at top of loud voice and all the others joking and talking the idea being to make the utmost row possible. Sometimes officer ot padre would walk in, and a half salute would be given by Galloway .Evg. 39 Div. Revue and wrote till 11.20 to mother and Bert Trickett. Weather cold and dull. Slight snow. No jorney for either.

JAN 16  
TUESDAY

Up with Caseby with cargo on my back Aft. rept and to Co. Tea with Pip, I buying lobster, which made him feel sick. He with mind astray. After drank malaga with others. Charley Willett

WED. 17-1-17 was going to be spliced.

Day of snow. Did bike. 9 men arrived for tuition.

THURS

18-1-17. Morn, tuition. Aft. fetched rations with the men, they being short, and finished with viv-voce exam. Evg. to 55 Div. Cinema in the front rows. Enjoyed it more than ever. This day Caseby

FRIDAY up to ro' ro' ten weather, sleet, etc.

19-1-17. Morning, I up with cargo on back. Back late after late start.

friday Bike wouldn't go. Aft. pay, rations, and finished class while

SAT.

Caseby to Corps.

20-1-17. Up with Caseby. Cold and bracing and dry. Enjoyed it. Aft. odd jobs (cleaning billet and shelves, mending, getting and sending washing, etc.) Met Fry and talked with him about debate. He several ideas for combating submarines--phials of coloured matter, the hue of which, bulbs being broken by smash of sub. prow, should disclose, as it rises to water surface with tint, showing whereabouts of subs. Nets of these. He refined and intellig. causal. Was battalion runner and when batt in action was now a brigade runner, given him as cushy job, riding down the Menin road at night. Skinner said his nerve had gone. A short time later he was killed.

*77-1 debate*

On Wednesday we had a debate at Talbot House on "That the war would finish this year." The usual fatuous optimism of some and the cynical witty scepticism of others and the incredibly futile ~~sanguineness~~ sanguineness of officers who should have known better. A Mr. Berry rose and said that we drew on the Huns to attack at Verdun, at Ypres gave way with intent in the same way, and he inferred that the Russian retreat might be due to the same kind of strategy. He had the air of assuring us that he and the brass hats were in the inner know, that we need have no fear, their mighty intellects had got the Hun weighed up, and it was only because we, the rank and file were obtuse and of little faith and uninitiate, that we ever doubted. Almost, so convinced was he himself, or so anxious was he to dope us, he convinced against our ingrained belief in the superior cleverness of Fritz. The miracle of Paris' saving by the motor car delivery of troops. Even Mr. Clayton tarred with same brush. He said, why no more definite account was given of the

Fritz losses in the Jutland Battle was lest we should give away the perfection of our Secret Intelligence Dept. at Kiel. Morning reports. Aft. practice mobilization, (More rumours about moving?) Evg. bard and cinema.

SUNDAY  
21-1-17  
MONDAY  
22-1-17

I to H.C. with cargo on back. Caseby to Ramparts with car. Aft, I to Corps. Hip quarrels with Price. I drink muscat after big tea in Dan Martin. Worried about Trewartha's birds and the snow. They're young and not used to it. He worried and the other pigeon-keeper called him a washerwoman.

TUESDAY  
23-1-17.

Was testing bike after breakfast when C.C.C.P.S came in. I announced, then put again to the back. "Who are you?" "The D. R. in charge." "Who are you?" "Skinner." "Who sleeps here?" "Wright." "Why not at the loft?" "Beacause Cavil at Debyses l/c while Couper away." I went out to bike then called in again. "There are six birds missing, Cpl. What are you doing about it?" "There is time for them to return yet, sir. I've wired and phoned about them."

While up at Ramparts asked Jack Hilton to take me round to Brigades. We stumped off. One was in a another Ramparts cave nearer Lille gate. Men lying in bunks sleeping or underneath playing cards. Fighting looked the remotest thing they thought of. Rest-ing. The old S.M in the <sup>blanket</sup> flannel-curtained room who offered me ru Then along the Lille Road, ove the moat/Bridge, and up the road. We were shelling all the time and Fritz occasionally replied on the left, some 200 yards away. "He'll take up when we've finished," so we're alright said Jack, taking no notice and cheerily proceeding. We met an occasional soldier now and then. Once I went into the ditch. We were under observation of glasses. Crossing the fields just ~~before~~ <sup>after</sup> Shrapnel Corner, past v erbranden Molen Rd. we got down by the Embarkment of railway and walked along over trenchboards, past dugouts. Men were sitting and standing about, and getting water and washing. They looked fairly clean, some of them. In the Bde. dugout signal office we found the signal sergt. and asked him the same as the sergt at the first dugout to bring back the birds by hand if snow was on the ground and same hadn't yet melted enough to show the roofs (Jack's formula). Then back. About a thousand yards from the front line. The nearest I've been. Railway Dugouts the H.Q. was called.

Afternoon, reports, cleaned revolver, and messtin. Dirty condon of equipment as a rule with D.R.s Evg. to Whist drive at Talbot House, but I late and no seats left in the cold but cheerful noisy room of soldiers, so back to work and wrote. Very FROSTY WEATHER LAST 4 DAYS.  $\frac{1}{2}$  in snow on ground. All in my shack frozen hard and had to melt ice with Primus in the morning in order to shave.

JAN 24  
WED

To Ramparts with cargo in car. Stuff falling (shrapnel) scared us. Aft. reports, reading, fetched rations.

Cavil's talk.

Tom Cavil: "OO car they say they've happened on it."

Thursday

To H.C. with birds. Intense cold cutting face, but I enjoyed the bracing run. Everything frozen. Aft. to Corps and walked

Jan 25

in the snow, seeing Mr. Nicholas doing likewise. Beautiful wintry

Friday  
Jan 26

landscape. Jock took all the cargo to Ramparts on his bike--dporting of

SAT  
27-1-17

him. I to H.C. Aft. report, rations and logs, and hut. Jock to H.C. I mended puncture, checked pigeon list, Aft. bike

SUN  
28-1-17

and hut. Evg wrote report, letters and this.

I took full cargo on back to Ypres Ramparts. To K. for 4954 missing bird. Smith ill in bed with influenza. Aft. report.

Monday  
29-1-17.

Evg. band and cinema.

Mr Underwood callrd me up at 9.45 re Smith who had been admitted into the field hospital near. I took Skinner to Renighelest to sub for Smith. Aft. did bike at S.O. Evg read and wrote.

TUES  
30-1-17.

Y I up with Caseby with birds via K. to Y. Aft. reports. Evg to Tivolies. Cold spell continues.

WED  
JAN 31

Mornng and aft on bike and special test work for pigeons. Day changeable with slight snow and heavy winds and changing to bright. Birds averaged from the line to Pop 28 minutes. To corps and evening with Pip. Cold continues. Diffic. lt work starting bikes in the morning from brewery shtd over the road.

Thurs  
Feb 1-17

With Caseby and birds via K to Y. Aft to Corps re Deering. Saw Mr. ~~Ernix~~ Underwood. "Capt Waley is after Cooper's body." "Ginger them up." You in charge."