

FRIDAY
ROW 3

Early morn. heard that Lieut. Larking was coming to inspect school arrangements upset thus, but carried on. He was round at 11.15. I was in front Room Boeschepe Street, the men standing and squatting. "Attention." "That's all-right, carry on." But he like "Shur" called all the same. He took from me a few papers I was examining, each happened to be bad (would be). However, he seemed satisfied with the questions, and my manner of checking answers.

Now with Caseby, who hadn't obtained particulars of Bdes to which birds were given, from Cotterell.

"That's no use of leaving anything to you. You know I want these particulars for my report. He sd Cotterell had refused. "I shall report his refusal," I sd, hoping thus to get Caseby to confess (if the case) that Cotterell hadn't really refused, for I half suspected Caseby was abetting him, to defeat me. Aerial activity over Pop.. Fritz like a white louse in blue of the sky and our shrapnel in white puffs following him vainly across the nadir. Despite having to attend to classes 2-4 tried to get , but unavailingly, particulars from Cotterell. Reported mildly that particulars of Bdes had not been forthcoming to Lt. Larking., mentioning no names.

THURSDAY
NOV 4

Down to Dupont's this morning and then to Talbot House came David Hunter, refined, ^{and} tall, good-looking Scot, with strong bony nose, fine eyes and clear-cut face."

"Bruce has sent me to replace Boyd?"
@What in the name of Fate for? You're pulling my leg?"

"No. Pip has to return at once."

"What's up. What have you been doing with the mademoiselles, Pip?"

Hunter's handsome face went graver and colder.
"It's simply that brute Bruce wants me out of the way. I'm too independent. The other fellows give in and let him have his own way--but why should we? They're afraid of him, and he's trying to curry favour with the Signalmaster. The Superintendent asks for 4 D.R.'s for the Counter. I say we can't spare them. And the others think the same but they don't say it. As it is we don't get give on a shift. I never get a proper relief off. One relief runs into another. So Bruce wants me out of the way.
-Well, David, bar Pip, there's no one I'd sooner have to work with. But Pip's my pal, always has been, and I'm cut up at losing him."

I was told he was prisoner in a camp of the existence I had not before heard---some A.S.C Wallahs of Ammunition Park people. Walked over fields and came to quite a group of sandbagged shacks , before one of which a man stood on guard.

"Have you got a man named Cottrell, here?"

He called inside, a man appeared and called Cottrell forward.

C. appeared much "down" and pale as if sleepless night had been passed. He stared at missive as if absorbed elsewhere. Genuine pity stirred in me for him. I away, thinking deeply on the ill-chances of the army and the lack of sympathy from upper officers, once the man has fallen.

The truth, learned later.

Cottrell had been playing cards and drinking too freely, and the Rations Corporal of Sigs. had had no rum to dish out.

Cottrell went to the officer.

"I want my rum issue, please (Sir)."

"I haven't got your rum."

"The corporai's got no issue for us."

"Can't help it."

"Well, it's being held up here and it's not the first time ."

"What do you mean? You're drunk, man. Get out of here."

"I'm not budging till I get my rum."

"Withers," Officer went to the door and called.

Put this man under arrest. Then fetch a guard over from the camp to put him under close arrest for insubordination."

"Fall in, two men, " called Withers. And Cottrell's luxurious days as a loftman were finished.

Then I heard this, I admired him for the first time. Though usually wrong, he was quite possibly this time in the right. Officers and NCO's did pinch the men's whiskey and it needed someone to have the pluck to stand up and tell them so. It was in keeping with the pervert justice of the army that it sould be on this score that it brought Cottrell down. No doubt felt, I'll stand up to 'em and tell 'em the truth for once. It's a scandal we should be robbed of our rum." And it required a man to stand up.

Aft. back to K. in great gale of wind blowing me all over the roadlike a sail my pigeon basket was. Exhilarating but risky. 24 new men for training by 10.30. Lectured till 12.45. Going crossing Boeschepe strasse, met Bland on 1915 Triumph motor bike. He was a G.H.Q. pigeon cpl. coming down to Lofts to pay the proprietresses or make enquiries. Hadn't seen him since England. He fed up. He on to K. Loft. I told him of Cottrell and school. Afternoon, school and Cooper's lists. Hunter, meanwhile, had made ne w bed and cleaned hut out ship-shape. Drastic news by D.R.L.S. Cavill to go to Kruisstraat. No conveyance. He with rifle and pack off, I promising to bring rest on car. He off, padding the hoof in rain. Tragedy of his leaving Pop loft where he'd been for so many months and going into the wildnerness.

ONDAY
OV 6

Evening wrote Divisional report on ashtrays tables in the ill-lit and crowded but humanly-cheerful rooms of Talbot House.

Morning in soaking wet to Kruisstraat and Ramparts. New o'alls on, cold and wet. Teemed down. At Ramparts altered chain in mire of gateway by Menie Gate. Rotten ruined places like out-houses thro' the dark and noisome gateway. Here men walked in and out fetching maconochie stew. There was a sudden rush and rat-hunt as two or three fierce ones darted out of the rubbish mound which ramparted the road opposite the Ramparts side. Jack stood by till he had to go to get his dinner. A day or two afterwards shell landed on that cookhouse and knocked the cook and others out.

At Fooringhe chain broke. I pushed bike home. Finished papers after finished dinner. Evg., wrote reports and worked.

Caseby re Cottrell:

"I've come for me ration of rum."

"I haven't it."

"The corporal says it's here."

"I don't budge till I get it."

"Get out."

"Ah'm asking only ma right."

Officer asked him 3 times to clear. Then 2 men put him out and in clink."

Rain so heavy that field at rear of hut was flooded.

10.30 24 more men. Started well. Afternoon, Hunter put new chain on. I missed Lieut. Larking who apparently came down to pigeon School while I was mending chain with Hunter. Upset. Evening, bath and worked in hut.

With birds to Kruisstraat. Tom stoical. Aft. had left class at 4 prompt (for a wonder) and Mr. Larking was after me again and caught me up by nice houses with paving stones over ditch--draper's shop, Cassel Road. He seemed suspicious of my being absent afternoon before and away so early to-day but when I explained he trusted me. Said he was expecting to go away to the 2nd Anzacs Corps. Would I like to go with him? If so, he would arrange transfer and look after me."

I really didn't want to go, as I rather feared his bold irresponsible spirit and what he would be leading me into. I said all my friends were here that the corps treated me well, that I was satisfied and wouldn't trouble him, but I thanked him. He said, that was alright--it would be a trouble to arrange the transfer.

Showed me his new 1917 model bike with the flat decompressor, pleased as Punch. Said the Army might any day move to Po p, as he knew the billets were already marked out. Expected things.

FRIDAY
NOV 10
1916

Morning, new lot of 30 scholars. Afternoon, over to Abeele to be photoed in group of D.R.'s with Mr. Larking in centre. Photoing arranged by Bruce. The photographer a business-like Belgian girl, inhabiting dark room shed at back of estaminet, where Bruce was said to "run" one of the proprietesses (He was always playing in there and getting drunk during service hours. The tale ran that at last he got fired out 'cause the Missis found out he was also carrying on with the skivvy).

NOTE: Types of Army sergeant: (D.R.)

Bruce, the drunkard.

Holmes, the ignorant blusterer.

1st Army dandy sergeant, dancing about in light cord breeches, Fox's puttees, and an officer's serge and belt (almost) The languorous poise of "How beautiful I look."

The genuine sport and worker like 8th. Corps D.R. Sergeant, working with them in dugout at Ypres.

I left Wright to show students how to handle the pigeons.

Evening, Williams, second Tiffy, came up to tea, and after went with Caseby and Hunter to Cinema. He pleased with our billet.

SAT
NOV 11

Morning to Kruisstraat. Aft, finished 30 men.

Morning, bright, on lorry with co n to Kruisstraat and returned

the 30 men on same.. Back to dinner, twice down to billet before kept tidy. Had difficulty in keeping billet clean. Didn't like to force men to take turns, and none would take their share voluntarily, and the cook was too busy. This was a sore and uncertain point with me. Afternoon, cleaned bike while Caseby and Hunter went to Hazebrouck. Evening band and cinema in Pop. Station Theatre. Late at night Staff deman explanation of delay in flight and transmission of messages. Looked things up and made report.

24 men arrived unexpectedly for training, so not at corps till 10.45 as I had numerous other jobs. Saw Mr. L. Got back from round with goods and birds at 12.40. And saw men. Aft., class till 4. Wrote report till 5. Tea. Tested tube. Filled lamp and to hut for early night.

Men marched up for instruction to loft. I to Corps. Aft.

finished men except examining papers, which had to leave.

Next morning found new men arrived.

(They used to drift all over Pop.--to Town Major's, to ration dump, to Town Hall, to station, to signal office, anywhere but school or loft, but loft at last as I sat at meals.)

Tues
NOV 14
WED
NOV 15

So I addressed myself nicely to Caseby, giving him second run .
At dinner I had a row with Caseby, as no clips had been taken up
with the birds, tho(here I was a little unfair, as Hunter and
Sim Coope also forgot the clips. Still, It seemed, that unless
I personally supervised, mistakes generally occurred.
Argument on same.. Mended tube. Afternoon, waiting for men to turn
up, ,ended picture, fitted tube and handlebar cuffs.
Sgt. Edmonds struck me in the road, and said the corps ought to
make me acting Sergeant.

Went to see Martha, the fat dark girl at Shop and coffee-
house on corner of lane. Her sidling and gazing tactics as
if bemused. Her ister ill in bed and Anzac on our strength who
tended her and wrote and who finally broke his leg on
Jock Campbell's bike, the man who replaced Lewis.

Tea, cinema and wrote report, and to bed at 10.30, very enjoy-
able night.

DESCRIBE INTERIOR OF POP THEATRE AND CINEMA HALL.

THURSDAY

OV: 16

With men, who kept arriving, and then to Sanitary Officer, Town
Major's, re Cooper's billet. Wrote report and telephoned. Aft.
class 2.15 to 4. Evg. Talbot House.

OV: 17
FRIDAY.

With Jack Evans away, th Cpl. in charge of Signal Dugout
was getting awkward. Caseby had words with him, and when I visited
him mildly, he said he'd got no insructions to take the messages,
he was a second army man, and he wasn't going to take them
without. Arranged with a Mr. Phillips at Signal jOffice AYAR to
take same, he quite decent in dugout in the entrails of the farm,
deep and cool and sandbagged and cavy and narrow. Hurriedly back,
and grumblingly swallowinf dinner, finished class of thirty and then
to Corps to report. Here felt a self-flatt ring fool, as I said
to Colonel Iles, in response to question what made the cpl. awkward
"I suppose Caseby had rubbed him up the wrong way," (smiling super-
iorly. "Stonishin what nptions these men get into their heads,"
said the Colonel with that cold quiet disdain he seemed to have
for his rank and file. After tea, went into Martha's dimly lit
room, where the faint lamp stank, there was a continual struggle with
fire, and where a few choice spirits, known there, dropped in to
write and talk, mostly Anzacs.

SAT
NOV 18

Morning finished 36 scholars off and sundry jobs. Aft. it rained. I went over to Corps and presented myself a sight in dripping cap and overall trousers too large, dragging in mud, for introduction to Mr. Underwood, who struck me as sturdy, small, neat, capable and quiet. I made farewell to my old O.C. who seemed moved at his leaving, as I was. He said again he was recommending me for sergeant, and took particulars of me, and when I said it was good of him, he said, "Why? You've deserved it haven't you?" Most bitter freezing rain back. Hair cut. Evg. wrote at Talbot House. Describe TALBOT HOUSE.

SUNDAY
NOV 19

Morning, with the birds. Afternoon, after much self debate and difficulty in getting corps (instead of having well-earned Sunday rest, rang up Corps to see if Brigades had been apprised of new order relating to a daily service of pigeons from Nov. 20 on instead of service every other day. Major Eyles replied. "I don't see that that concerns you. You get orders to do a certain job, and you do it, that's all."

A deadly chilling contempt was in his voice. Evidently he said to himself: "I'll teach this corporal a lesson. He's getting far too presumptuous--imagines he's running the service, I suppose."

Nov 20
MONDAY

"Very good, sir," I said, utterly snubbed. If I hadn't spoken and men hadn't turned up--"Why didn't you arrange things?" New arrangements started--delivery every day. Started new and last pigeon class. Up to Halleabast Corner with birds, Weather changed to cold in night. Caseby's account of Halleabast corner as hot corner, under obs. Describe HALLEBAST CORNER FARM. The two dark fat farm girls. The ceaseless crowd of Tommies, The imbecile girl who put and picked from the cooking dinner. Old man. Church at La Wlytte.

TUES
NOV 21
WED
NOV 22

Aft. finished class. Rvg. Talbot House. Morning, writing report and hung on telephone on hut. Afternoon, I myself cleaned the billet, which the man this time had left unswept in two places, stairs, and three latrine places.

BATH.
EXTREME SENSITIVENESS OF SOLDIERS IN CLASS. Evg. cinema. Slept

THURS
NOV 23

at 10 and woke at 6:45. Took two runs as Hunter's eyes were watering badly in the raw weather. Town major rings up to call re billet unsatisfactory.

FRIDAY
NOV 24

Evg. wrote at Talbot House. Called at Town Major(s) at 9 but waited 1/2 hour in vain. Cleaned 2 rooms, 1 outhouse, 2 sacks of refuse from our mess billet--broken glass and rubbish long decaying. Aft. cleaned bike. Rumours of activity to come from Jack Hilton.

HILTON'S "Dost see?" "It's thine,." "He waint."

SPEECH.

Sat

Nov 25

To Ramparts from Cassier's. Pouring rain. Waiting at Loft, Hunter grumbled, not seeing delay inevitable with lofts short of Cavill. Grouse unreasonable. I return scouses to late dinner, glad work over. Jimmy (with twinkling eyes, rubbing his elbows: "You wouldn't go out again, I'll bet." "Wouldn't I? Should have to if . . .") At that moment a telegram was handed me by orderly, Jim Warr, grusing like hell and half drunk. It was from Caseby: "Await Instructions. Broken down." Hunter said, "I shouldn't go out again. Wire him to come back." He didn't volunteer to take my, tho' I had taken his run a day or so before. I cursed, went off thro' dull sat. afternoon down Boescepe st. and Reninghelst Road. Met him coming back. Magneto trouble. He'd managed to get mag. going so thought it best to leave birds and come back while he could. A thing I'd never done. I persisted the birds shd go up, and went to loft, got them out again and took them, and just caught

SUN
NOV 26

Taylor who was still waiting for them. Got headache fixing up. To Corps over Cooper's leave. With Cavill away it was difficult to grant this leave which was due, and all Sat night I lay and stewed how to fix things up, till midnight. Harold Wordley in orderly room unmoved by my keenness. Afternoon, cleaned bike. Evening bike and cinema, but had headache thro' being fool big enough to exert myself so much for other people.

MONDAY
NOV 27

I round round with Sergt. Edmonds on new car. Aft. round with Lie t. Underwood, who was nice. A new G.H.Q. man meantime was sent down per Sergt. Christian. Christian, big sandy and hairy. New man, Forster at Cavil's. Hughie introduced and said he to work Cooper's routine. I not hasty in taking up his assumptiin of control, and it then emerged that these were G.H.Q. instructions.

MONDAY
NOV 28

Evening wrote business at Talbot House. Morn, compiled chart at T.H. after doing Cooper's work at De-Byes' Loft until 11. As I walked into dinner at 1, saw, art grey car in passage beside Dupont's loft and mess. and had dim idea who was there.

"Captain Waley (s upstairs asking for D.R. in charge," sd Forster. My heart beat, my voice was disturbed, tho' I strove for calm.

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"Pottering the lofts are
"arrangements closed down under Corps approval. I didn't know the reinforcement would be up so soon. We've usually waited so long for the."

"You'll open them to-morrow, then," he snapped, annoyed at his reflection on G.H.Q. Plenty of men to do the work. "All these orderlies--can't they do something."

Another time he wouldn't let an orderly touch a loft.

"How many birds up the line?" he next asked.

"EE 44 gone up to-day and 22 on yesterday's still there."

"What time do you get them up?"

"All o'clock (11)."

"And the men fetch them then?"

"About then. An hour to get up the line. . ."

"That only leaves three hours for them to be flown back. They might as well go up later, and the trench birds be flown next morning."

I gave only 1 answer tho I ought to have given several reasons for going up early, viz.,

Liability to breakdown of bike or car.

Birds returned in wet and misty weather.

Better for lofts.

But I told him about school to be attended to, and that ever since the Somme I had always gone up early in case second supply were wanted.

"Why a car?" he next asked. "They take them to P by bike."

"Well, its better for the birds," I muttered, conscious that it was best for us. (I ought to have mentioned taking up stores, trainers, clothes for outlying lofts.)

"Um." He gave no word of praise or encouragement, and I cussed him for a churl, and regretted bitterly I had let down Hugnie.

Day fine till 2 then very misty and raw. Round myself with car, and a good job. New round. At Ramparts, half the birds had been brought back by hand.

I remember I had at first been upset by losing a bird or two, but Edmonds said with the winter coming on it was inevitable,

I got to regard losses of two or three a week with equanimity. Took returns to Kruistraat and M.L.A. Fine dinner. Art. wrote reports and worked at Talbot House. Warm chips and eggs at next door's for a change. Joyful men inside. Evg. wrote at Talbot house this and loft work.

NOV 29
WED
1916

(19)

NOV 30

weather dull and raw and very cold with mist.

THURSDAY

Much commed and talked over O.C. C.I.S.'s strictures, and apol-
ogised to Hughie for my inadvertence in giving away his fault
of nerve, in not being a washerwoman with regard to his birds.

Saw Mr. U. Gave him chart, and explained how time had been taken
up with it. "I like to take my share of the other work, going
up the line." He enigmatic, and I felt small, as if I had in-
ferred that I was a wander in this, whereas he took it for granted

FRIDAY
DEC 1

As Trewartha was going on leave he broke a bottle of champagne
in his loft, of which Hunter also later partook.
Worked hard at chart so it must have been to-day I gave it Mr. U.
First, I went up with the birds and then looked on chart and also
at night.

SAT
DEC 2

Finished chart this morn. Afternoon, with it to Corps. Two or

D.R.s followed after first saying it was too cold. (Caseby who
after his famous breakdown used to keep his bike revving outside
Smith's Loft at Reminghelst while he had birds basketed. lest
his engine getting cold shouldn't start.)

On Tuesday (was it?) row with Caseby about coals of which I
took a few to put in the stove which Galligan had s kindly
found and fitted up for me. They at the billet used the Pigeon

Service coal all day, and I was entitled to small share. Caseby
tried to make out I was pinching it. I sat numbed with cold

one night in mess, mending buttons (Army buttons always come off
after about 2 week's wearing). Had to bathe feet in warm water
to get them warm and Jim and Caseby came down, surprised to find
me there ready to join them.

SUNDAY
DEC 3

Round with the birds. Af . Caseby to Mobile Loft, Abeele,, and
according to him, it was a F---up at the loft with Roberts
in charge. Band and cine, a.

MONDAY
DEC 4

To Corps on Caseby's bike, some starter and rider, and saw new
man installed, hefty bloke. Interduced to Dergt. Scarf, pale
and aesthetic looking, yet mending motor-car puncture. and
changing wheel. Told ?r. Underwood I knew enough French to
ask at Abeele chateau Civvy loft if I could buy some cocks. But
the girl there, supposed toy of officers, behind counter of ad-
joining shop with steps up from hedg, pale, elegant, painted,
sceneted, and thin, she could not sell any of her father's
birds, but could lend them me to "jouer." Their loft about
6 inches deep in old filth--stank awful.

To Talbot House for tea. Captain Clayton and ikey lieutenant.
Three rather sycophantic N.Cos of the superior and well-groomed
type. Srguments about books, Germans, English, inefficient Govt
of England. Downs sea raid. Mildly Capt. Clayton

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