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THE
ROLL OF HONOUR

OF

Caxton House Printing Office

DUNDEE

A RECORD OF THE MILITARY EXPERIENCES OF THE
EMPLOYEES WHO SERVED IN THE GREAT WAR
1914-19



JAMES P. MATHEW & CO.

PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS

CAXTON HOUSE

DUNDEE

1920

P R E F A C E

THIS book has been compiled as a Token of Gratitude to our gallant lads from Caxton House who served in the Great War of 1914-19, and as a Permanent Record of the hardships they so heroically endured, of the dangers they so bravely faced, and of the sacrifices they so nobly rendered.

It was not from the love of soldiering that our printer boys joined the Army. They went to war because danger threatened their country and their homes—they went from the conviction that Duty summoned them to assist in establishing on the earth the sacred principles of Honour and Justice and Liberty.

Four of our lads, alas, now sleep their last long sleep in distant lands! To their sorrowing relatives the sincere sympathy of employers and fellow-workers is respectfully tendered.

JOHN D. MATHEW.

JAMES MATHEW.

CAXTON HOUSE,
DUNDEE, *September 1920.*



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ROLL OF HONOUR.

FRED S. BUIK

(AGED 18½),

PRIVATE (27789), 2ND KING'S OWN SCOTTISH BORDERERS.

KILLED IN ACTION 20TH OCTOBER 1918.

FRED BUIK, compositor, commenced his apprenticeship with us on 18th November 1912. He had received his schooling in S. Salvador's Episcopal School and in Stobswell Public School, and before entering our employment he had worked for a short time as office boy with Baxter Bros. & Co., Ltd. He was a boy of good promise, of an attractive disposition, anxious to learn, and clever at his work.

Of an athletic temperament, Fred was keenly interested in football, cycling, swimming, and gymnastics, but of these he seemed to take the greatest pleasure in football. Even as a schoolboy he was one of the team which won the Dundee Public Schools Championship in 1909, and later he played regularly for Dundee Violet F.C., perhaps the premier junior club in the East of Scotland. When in France with the K.O.S.B., Fred was honoured with a place in their eleven. He played in the 5th Division Championship, his team winning the medals.

Fred belonged to a large family of nine. His mother had the hope, after three of her boys (two of them married) had gone to the army, that her Benjamin would be left to her, to be the mainstay of the home in days to come. But as time rolled on, and as the skies seemed to be ever growing darker for home and country, Fred anticipated the passing of the Military Service Act, and on 1st November 1915 he enlisted voluntarily

Fred S. Buik

in the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry. For a fortnight he was quartered at Kirkcaldy, then he was transferred to Bungay, in Suffolk.

The high-spirited boy did not take kindly to army ways. Ready as he was to submit to all orders which were based on reasonableness and justice, he could ill brook some of the arbitrary commands of military life. At one period in his training he happened to be under a riding master who, by his autocratic manner, made himself much disliked by his troop. Fred Buik somehow fell into disfavour with this man, and one day the latter went so far as to strike Fred across the back with his whip. Regardless of consequences, the boy turned upon his officer and knocked him down. Fred was at once arrested and lodged in the guard-room. The colonel held an inquiry into the case, and it stands to his honour that he censured the officer for his tyrannical manners, and acquitted the boy with a caution to be more amenable to discipline in future.

Here is one of Fred's letters describing his early experiences. The style of it seems to breathe the frank, free, healthy temperament of the lad—

“Flixton Park, Bungay, Suffolk, 15th Nov. 1915.—I presume you have heard by now of my departure for the South. We are stationed twenty miles from Norwich, and about four miles from the nearest village, right in the heart of the country, and that, coupled with the hard but healthy training undergone here, will, I have no doubt, help to make a man of me. We sleep in huts, there being about twenty to thirty men in each; and as there are two fires there is no disputing about comfort. Rising with reveille at 5.30, we take the horses down to the water to drink, riding one and leading two. After that we feed and groom them, and then adjourn for breakfast, which is usually composed of porridge, and tea with ham or a kipper following. We parade for riding school at 8.30, and that lasts



FRED S. BUIK.

Fred S. Buik

till 10. Physical drill is from 10 to 11, and then we have a rest till 12, when we again water the horses. Squadron drill is the item from 2.15 until 3.30 P.M., and we water again for the last time; and after tea we are free up to 10 o'clock.

"How is everybody at Caxton House? You might thank —— for his letter and parcel; it was very kind and thoughtful of him. I am feeling a little sore after my week's unaccustomed hard riding, but I shall be getting forty-eight hours off duty, as I am to be inoculated to-morrow. There is word of some of us being put into the advanced squadron, as the Colonel says we are doing exceedingly well. Adieu!

"P.S.—Next time I shall try to give you a better sample of my manuscript, as I am somewhat hurried at present."

Here follows another letter of a later period, as breezy in tone as the first—

"Attached Hdqrs., Signal Troop, 2nd Mtd. Brigade, Thorndon Park Camp, Brentwood, Essex, 16th Aug. 1916.—You no doubt will be surprised to hear from me after so long a spell of not writing, but if you only knew that at times I could only get a few words home to say I was still alive and kicking, you might forgive me a little. I am now attached to the Headquarters Ammunition Column, and I am glad to say it is far easier work, and there is also plenty of time to work in, a most uncommon thing in the army. I have only to turn out on field days, and sometimes not even then, and as the troops have been away on trek for over a week now, I have done absolutely nothing. They don't make us get up until 7.30 in the morning, and then I am always free in the afternoon to do just as I like. Just about a month or two like this and then demobilisation, and by that time I shall be in fine trim to start on the *O.S. Magazine* once again.

"Do you ever hear from Johnnie Forrest or Jim

Dall, or any of the other chaps? I often wonder how they are getting on. I expect there are some changes in the staff these past few months. Have the married men managed to get an exemption? I hope so. It is a dreadful business altogether, and the end does not seem to be in sight yet. Kindly convey my best wishes to Mr. — and the men."

In the autumn of 1916, having been transferred to the K.O.S.B., Fred was sent over to France. There he must have seen much of the horror of actual warfare, for he was in many engagements, although he never wrote about them. If ever his spirit had been touched by the glamour of military pride and glory, now assuredly his whole heart was in revolt against the path he was compelled to tread. His mother sometimes used to upbraid her boy because his letters were so few and so uninteresting, but how could he speak to his mother of the scenes amongst which his days and nights were spent? Every letter he wrote expressed his longing to be out of the army and to be back at his work, no matter how monotonous at times might be the job in hand. Nearly every letter ended with good wishes to his shopmates. To one of them he wrote—

"I would even suffer reading the Voters Roll sooner than the job I'm at. You will have to underline the 18th November, the day when I started my apprenticeship. I would have had five years in this month only for this war. I wonder if I will manage to get back to the workshop before the seven are up. I hope so, anyway, for surely the war can't always last."

In January 1917 he had a respite from the battlefield through being sent to hospital with frostbitten feet—first to Boulogne, and then, at the end of the month, to England. Here is a letter from him about that time—

"Summerdown Camp, Eastbourne, 27th March 1917.
—Many thanks for your very welcome letter. I should

Fred S. Buik

have written sooner, but I was always expecting to get home. The doctor said I would not be quite fit for a few weeks yet, so I was sent down here for further convalescence. I think I have been very fortunate, for I was the only one of the thirty men being discharged from hospital to be sent down here. After the last turn I had in the trenches, instead of going back to the billets, my feet were so bad that I was put straight into hospital. I have been down here for a fortnight now. It is not at all bad; anyway, it is much better than France. We only do an hour's light work in the morning, and then we are free to go wherever we choose from 1 till 9.30 P.M. Not at all bad, is it? I had a note from —— the other day, and he was telling me that Gillanders had been invalided home. I only hope he will never need to go out again. I know I don't want, anyway. But I think we shall see the finish of it this summer. I shall only be too glad to take up my stand at the 'case' once more. Give my best wishes to all in the workshop."

Fred recovered, and in the end of May he reported at the depot of the K.O.S.B. at Duddingston, near Edinburgh. Then by the middle of June he left with a draft for France, and again he took his stand on the field of battle.

Towards the end of 1917 the regiment was removed to the Italian front, where it remained until the spring of 1918. Fred was glad to be out of France, and in a letter he wrote—"Anyway, this cannot be any worse than what we have *come through* these past few months. I'm very fortunate to be here now."

And in another letter (20th January 1918)—"11th Platoon, Lewis Gun Section, D Coy., 2nd K.O.S.B., Italian Expeditionary Force.—I expect by this time you know I am in Italy. It is all right so far, as we are having a good rest. But as far as fighting is concerned it can't be any worse than what we left, and

Fred S. Buik

I hope it won't be as bad either. I suppose you will be having it fairly quiet just now. I wish it were all finished and I was back once again, for this war has lasted too long already."

But this time of quiet did not last long, for in a few months the regiment was sent back to France, to the old, dreadful strife. And now, writing from there on 19th May 1918, Fred says—"Your letter has been a long time on the road, but of course we have been in France again for about a couple of months, worse luck! We are having scorching weather here just now, and a good job, too, as we have had quite enough cold weather to last us some time. I don't think I would make much of an Arctic explorer, for the winters out here just about do me in. You say you will soon be starting on the Voters Roll again. I wish I were there. Good wishes to all in the shop."

In August Fred had a fortnight's leave, which he spent at home. Then stern duty once more called him back to France. About his journey from Dundee he says—"After I had left the Tay Bridge Station on Friday night I felt as if I could take the next train back from Edinburgh; and then I thought, 'Well, I'll have to go back, anyway.' Then I settled down to try to snooze and forget all about it, but it was a rather difficult job to do that. I had to change at Edinburgh; the train was packed, and of course I had to make the best of it in the corridor crowded with quite a few drunk sailors and soldiers. However, I would not mind suffering that to come back again."

On arriving in France Fred had some difficulty in locating the K.O.S.B., and he wrote—"I thought I was never to find the battalion, as I was on the road from Sunday to Saturday before I found them. I was not sorry to find them either, for one gets 'fed up' knocking about here and there."

Fred S. Buik

Again, from France on 6th Oct. 1918, he says—"We seem to be doing very well here lately. If it keeps on I can see myself getting home sooner than I expected."

Once more, from France on 17th Oct., Fred sends home a postcard saying that he is well. Then there follows a great silence, which is broken only when his mother receives the fatal missive—

Infantry Record Office,
Hamilton.

Madam,

It is my painful duty to inform you that a report has been received from the War Office notifying the death of 27789 Pte. F. Buik, 2nd K.O.S.B., which occurred with the Expeditionary Force, France, on the 20th October 1918. The report is to the effect that he was killed in action.

By His Majesty's command, I am to forward the enclosed message of sympathy from their gracious Majesties the King and Queen. I am at the same time to express the regret of the Army Council at the soldier's death in his country's service.

OFFICER IN CHARGE OF RECORDS.



The King commands me to assure you of the true sympathy of His Majesty and The Queen in your sorrow.

He whose loss you mourn died in the noblest of causes. His Country will be ever grateful to him for the sacrifice he has made for Freedom and Justice.

MILNER,
Secretary of State for War.

Application for further particulars of Fred's death having been made to the Commanding Officer of his

Fred S. Buik

Company, that gentleman was kind enough to send the following reply—

11th Nov. 1918.

I regret to inform you that Pte. Buik was killed in action in an entirely successful attack which this battalion, in conjunction with others, made on the night of the 20th-21st October last about six miles N.E. of Caudry [near Cambrai]. The attack was against a strong position. He was acting as Coy. stretcher-bearer, and did most excellent and gallant work. If he had lived our Medical Officer was going to have recommended him for a Military Medal. He was killed instantaneously by a shell, and, the day after the battle, was brought to Caudry and buried the following day by the Rev. Hall, Chaplain to the Forces, in Caudry Cemetery. He has a good wooden cross over the grave, with his name, regtl. number, and date he died on it.

Yours faithfully,

J. S. HOWORTH.

And so this fine, bright, manly youth now sleeps his last long sleep in a foreign land. To his sorrowing mother there will be some sad consolation in the thought that he lost his life in the very act of saving the lives of others. To her there will also be the comforting assurance that her gallant boy went forth to battle for the right against the wrong; that he gave his young life in sacrifice that the spirit of justice and honour might be victorious over the dark powers of injustice and oppression. To human life there is no nobler end!

JOHN J. CORMACK

(AGED 19),

PRIVATE (16985), 6TH BATTALION ROYAL SCOTS FUSILIERS.

POSTED AS MISSING 26TH SEPTEMBER 1915.

JOHN CORMACK, printer, had the misfortune to lose his father when he was only five years old. He was brought up and educated in Donaldson's Hospital, Edinburgh, from his eighth until his fourteenth year, when he returned to Dundee to be with his mother. He went to work, first as lodge boy with Baxter Brothers & Co., Ltd., then as lift boy with Smith Brothers. Lastly, on 13th Nov. 1911, he came to serve his apprenticeship to the printing trade with us.

John was a boy of a likeable disposition, happy and good and kindly in all his ways. He liked his work, and he had the hope that the day would come when his apprenticeship would be finished and he would become the support of his mother and sisters. He had three brothers, but one had removed to Cowdenbeath, and two had emigrated to Honolulu, so John had to count himself as "the man of the family."

The war broke out, and the minds of men were filled with the thought of it. John Cormack looked up at a great poster which was exhibited at the Town House—a picture representing a brutal German soldier with his iron foot upon a helpless infant, and a tartan-kilted soldier standing forward to protect a wretched woman. The boy's tender and sympathetic heart was thrilled before the awful sight. Men must go to crush this hideous monster of oppression—he, John Cormack, a

John J. Cormack

gentle, kindly boy, must buckle on his armour and go into the battle. He went straight home; he told his mother that he would need to leave her; and his loving mother gave her boy her blessing!

On his nineteenth birthday, the 26th January 1915, John Cormack left home to enter the ranks of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, in Kitchener's Army. Ayr was his first destination, but he was quartered there for one night only. Next day he was transferred to Greenock, where he received his army training, and where he greatly enjoyed the open-air life, the healthy exercise, and the happy comradeship.

One day there came from John the ominous news that he had been picked for a draft. There was no time for "draft leave" in these hurried days, and his last farewell was a postcard to his mother—"Good-bye, mother; I'm coming back. Keep up!"

Then there came letters from France from time to time, but as the soldiers were forbidden to give any information as to where they were located or what they were doing, John's letters to his mother and to his friends were necessarily uninteresting. The simple, kindly spirit of the boy, however, shines through them all. Only the repetition of the word "trenches" caused his mother to tremble for his safety.

"6th Sept. 1915—Dear Mother,—Just a note to let you know how I am still getting on. I have just received the writing pad you sent, and I am very pleased with it, as it will just suit me first-class. I don't have very much news, just that we are still out of the trenches, and that I am enjoying the best of health. We have a lecture on this afternoon. Hoping this finds all at home in the best of health.—Your loving son, John."

To his Employers.—"12th Sept.—Just a line to let you know how I am still getting on. I suppose you know that I am out in France now. I am out of the



JOHN J. CORMACK.

John J. Cormack

trenches in the meantime. We came out last night after being in five days. The first time we were in the trenches we were not very far away from the Germans; we could hear them singing and playing whistles, but we were not so near them this time. Have any more of the men in the shop enlisted yet? I often wish this war were finished and that I was back again in J. P. M. & Co.'s; but it might not be long now. Tell all the workers that I was asking for them. Hoping to hear from you soon. Let me know how everybody in the shop is getting on."

"19th Sept.—Dear Mother,—Just a note to let you know I am still getting along all right. I have been looking for a note from you. I got Lizzie's letter all right. I am in the trenches again, but we will not be in them long this time, I think. Have you had any word from Bill or Alf yet, or David? You might send on more writing paper, as this will be finished by the time I get it. I have no more news at present. Hoping this finds all at home well and working away as usual. I will close now with heaps of love to you and the girls.—Your loving son, John."

"21st Sept.—Dear Mother,—I received your most welcome letter all right in the trenches yesterday morning, and I got your parcel when we came out last night. We are out of the trenches again. I am glad to hear you had a letter from the boys and that they are still getting on all right. I will write to them soon again. I will have to write to Annie and Jean very soon. I do not have any more news at present, just that I am getting on all right, and enjoying the best of health, hoping all at Morgan Street are the same. Tell all at home I was asking for them. I will close now with heaps of love.—Your loving son, John."

Then the last postcard without a date—"Dear Mother,—I am leaving to-night at ten for the front. Keep these photos [a group of his draft, and a nice

John J. Cormack

picture of two of his comrades, both since killed], I will want them when I come back. Will write soon again. Keep up.—John.”

The battle of Loos took place on the 25th September 1915, and among the casualties reported from the base, under date 18th November 1915, was the entry—

Missing.
6th Royal Scots Fusiliers.
Cormack, 16985 J.

Application was made to the War Office for further particulars, and the answer came—

War Office, London, S.W., 30th Nov. 1915.—In reply to your inquiry of 15th November 1915, I am commanded by the Army Council to inform you that 16985 Private John J. Cormack, 6th Royal Scots Fusiliers, has been reported in a casualty list which has reached this office as “Missing” since the 26th/29th September 1915. I am, however, to point out that, as stated in the public press, any further inquiry of this kind should be addressed to the Officer in Charge of Records, Infantry Record Office, Hamilton, N.B., who is in possession of the latest and fullest information obtainable respecting soldiers of this regiment.

Inquiry was accordingly made at this Record Office, and the reply was given as follows—

6th Dec. 1915.—I beg to acknowledge receipt of your communication of 3rd inst. relative to 16985 Private John J. Cormack, 6th Battalion Royal Scots Fusiliers. The only information in my possession has already been notified to the soldier's mother—namely, that he was reported “Missing” since 26th September last. I would suggest that you seek the aid of the Red Cross, and I enclose you a form showing what particulars to send them.

OFFICER I/C RECORDS.

John J. Cormack

The British Red Cross was now communicated with, and was requested to do all that was possible to ascertain the fate of the boy. In course of time the answer came—

British Red Cross and Order of St. John, 3rd January 1916—Private John J. Cormack 16985, D Company, 6th Royal Scots Fusiliers.—I regret to say that all the news we have obtained about the above is very sad, though it points to the great gallantry of Private Cormack.

Lance-Corporal Kayes 12055, 14th Platoon, D Company, Royal Scots Fusiliers, now in hospital abroad, place unknown, gives the following account, which I give you in his own words:—

“He joined me at Bethune. He was in my platoon (14); and I knew him well. I saw him go over the parapet of his own accord. He did this once before. He just walked straight over. He was very game, and was determined to do something. He once led a platoon over. The second time he went out by himself. He was half-way to the German trench when he was killed instantaneously by a bullet through the head. I saw this.”

Alas! John Cormack has not returned from the battlefields of France. A comrade he used to have in the Y.M.C.A. came back, indeed, and told how he and John had spent two hours together in the communication trench on the Sabbath day, and how they mutually made promise that if either of them were taken away the other would convey the tidings home.

The second of our staff to enlist, John Cormack was the first to fall. But his mother will ever lovingly cherish the memory of her gentle-hearted knight who went forth to battle, not for vainglorious ends, but for the defence and succour of the oppressed.

ERNEST LEWS GILLANDERS

(AGED 23),

DIED OF WOUNDS, 11TH OCTOBER 1918.

GUARDSMAN (14042), 2ND BATTALION SCOTS GUARDS.

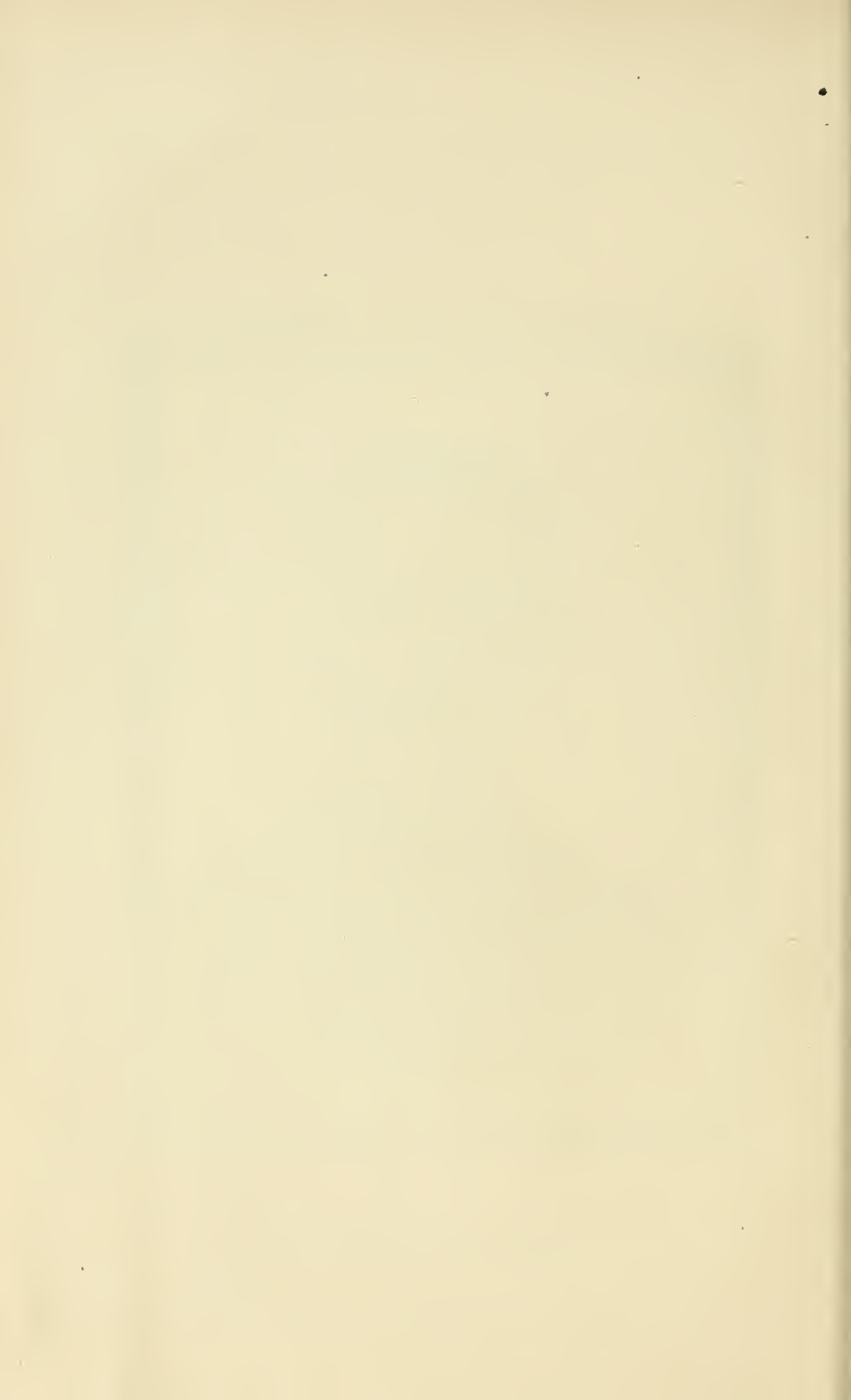
ERNEST GILLANDERS, stationer, was a native of our Western Hebrides. He was born on 4th November 1891 at Stornoway, where his father was the estate agent of the Island of Lewis. The family removed to Inverness when Ernest was only 2½ years old, and the boy received his education at Inverness High School. Schooldays over, he served his apprenticeship with James Cornet, stationer, Inverness.

In November 1913, in order to widen his experience, Ernest came to Caxton House. Our customers may still remember the tall, gentlemanly lad with the pleasant Highland accent who did his utmost to fulfil their wishes. He was an affectionate and dutiful son. One of his first acts on coming to Dundee was to make arrangements for the transferring of the home from Inverness, so that the members of the family might be united under one roof.

At the outbreak of the Great War, Ernest Gillanders felt that duty beckoned him to join the army, but for a time his path was not quite clear, as his home was also claiming his attention. Life became less pleasant for Ernest as the days rolled on. He dared not walk in freedom on the High Street of Dundee from the fear that passers-by might taunt him with selfishness and cowardice. Ladies even in those trying days did not consider it beyond their province to ask this fine, handsome lad why he should think it right to



ERNEST LEWS GILLANDERS.



Ernest Lews Gillanders

remain in comfortable safety when so many others had gone to risk their lives in defence of home and country.

At last Ernest Gillanders made his final decision, and on 7th June 1915 he went, alone, to the recruiting office and enlisted in the British Army. In the Scots Guards, our premier infantry force, Ernest elected to serve, for as a boy the Guards had claimed his admiration, and now no other form of service would satisfy him.

Quiet and modest as he was when he stood at his counter in the Cowgate, the Celtic fire was pulsing in his veins, and it appears to us now that our foes, the Germans, made a tremendous, fatal blunder in their worldly calculations when by unjust and unrighteous course of action they called forth such lads as Ernest Gillanders to confront them on the field of battle.

At Caterham Barracks, Surrey, Ernest was trained for service. It was a stern experience this training of the Guards, for the men were hardened with work and drill and discipline until their bodies and their spirits became as strong as steel. Of the softening sentiments of human kindness and sympathy there was little to be found in the atmosphere of Caterham. Ernest suffered much during these months, but he endured heroically until he passed as a finished guardsman.

He wrote to us several times from Caterham, and we may extract some sentences from his letters.

"17th June 1915.—L Coy., Room 29, Scots Guards, Tin Town, Caterham.—Dear Mr. Mathew,—As you will see from my address, I am in the Guards at the long last. The life here is quite different from anything I ever went through, and there is no getting away from the fact that it is hard work. We have to scrub floors, beds, tables, and heaps of other things. We go to bed at 9.15, to be asleep by 9.30; we must not smoke nor talk after 9.30. Some days we have to be up at

Ernest Lews Gillanders

5.30 A.M., other days at 6. . . . I did not pass the doctor the first time, but I passed yesterday, so sometime I will see the Germans, and do my bit. . . . The sergeants are not very nice, but one soon gets used to their shouting. I get on very well with my sergeant, because I just do what I am told, and that is everything here."

"17th Aug.—We are trying to make a record in turning out the squad in twelve weeks' time. It usually takes sixteen to seventeen weeks to pass out, but, although I am saying it, our squad is very smart. We get some very queer things to learn, such as the list of the Scots Guards' battle honours, which would be useless for fighting the Germans. I hope to get my furlough of seven days in about a fortnight, and then I will be able to give you more news. . . . I hope that very soon I will be able to see the Continent, and that we will make our headquarters in Germany, but by the news that we receive there is bound to be a lot of blood shed yet. What do you and your Russian friend think of the Russian retreat? I hope they don't retreat too far. Perhaps the Grand Duke will make one great charge and blot the Germans out. The Russians have the men, but they are without the shells. . . . We expect to hear about the finishing of the Dardanelles at any time. There is one of the battalions of the Scots Guards there, and we have a little news now and again. . . . When I was up at London I went to see Jack Fraser; he looks well and enjoys the life very much, but I think there is a difference between a guardsman and a sailor. I think the Guards hold the honour, but what does it matter when we are all fighting for the same goal."

"14th Dec.—Q Coy., Scots Guards, Kensington Barracks, London.—I have been here going through a course of machine gun drill, and am glad to say I passed the test. A machine gun is a most

Ernest Lews Gillanders

interesting and wonderful gun. I thought it better to go and learn about it while I was waiting for my teeth, as it does one no harm to learn up anything new. . . . I was very glad to see that so many of Caxton House employees had enlisted. . . . We expected an air raid last Friday, but it did not come off. We were all glad, as we do not like the zepps to visit us on cold nights. We see a lot of London when we go on route marches, but, so far, I do not like London. I would rather be in some Scottish country village. I think Scotland is a far better country than England; I can't explain, but somehow or other I don't feel at home in it."

"16th March 1916.—We have been confined to barracks very often these last few weeks owing to zeppelins and aeroplanes being over England, but they haven't visited London for a long while. I suppose they have heard about the defences of London. One sees large numbers of guns about, but for the marksmanship we know nothing."

"26th May — Wellington Barracks, London.—I returned here a week to-day after a month's training at Corsham, in Wiltshire. Our training there consisted of trench-digging, bomb-throwing, catapult throwing, and night attacks. It was the finest training I ever had. We were in billets, and my pal and I landed in a very nice and comfortable home. Corsham is a small place, about the size of Tayport; it is nine miles from Bath. The industry of the district is stone quarrying, and the stone is very white, but soft. . . . We had a route march to Bath on a Saturday forenoon, and I think it is the cleanest city I was ever in. On my return to London, I made a point of having a night clear, so that Jim Dall and I could have a walk; so last Saturday we walked round by Lambeth and Clapham to the corner of Battersea and back. We enjoyed it much,

Ernest Lews Gillanders

and we talked about the happy days we had in Dundee and Caxton House. Duty is a bit stiff, but there is a saying, 'More duty, more honour.' Perhaps we could do without so much duty, but drill is not so bad after all. Along with ninety-nine other guardsmen, I was at a memorial service to the late Brigadier-General Heyworth, Scots Guards, who was killed three weeks ago. It was a very solemn service, and all the heads of the army were there."

Ernest Gillanders did a great deal of Royal Guard work while he was stationed at Wellington Barracks. He was frequently posted at St. James's Palace, Buckingham Palace, and Marlborough House, and in that way he was taught to recognise and to suitably salute the royalties and notabilities of the day. Lord Kitchener he frequently saw, as the great general passed in and out of the palace on his visits to the King. The Bank of England was another of the places where Ernest used to be posted on guard. He was sent to the east end of London when the city was menaced by German air raids. On one occasion in particular, when a mother and child were killed by a bomb before his very eyes, his heart flamed to righteous anger against the miscreants who had done the shameful deed.

On free afternoons Ernest used to visit the many places of interest in London; but, best of all, he liked to ride on the top of a bus out to Hampton Court, or to some terminus, where he could breathe the sweet, fresh breeze of the country and where he could look upon the green grass and the trees and the open heavens.

In August 1916 Ernest was sent over to France in a draft of reinforcements. He wrote—

"6th Sept.—1st Batt. Scots Guards, Guards Base Depot, Harfleur.—At last I have come across the

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Channel. We had a very rough passage and a very wet one. I got a job as servant to Lieutenant C. Fenner, a very nice gentleman. I do everything for him, bar the washing, which I send to a French woman. She speaks very little English, but with signs I can make her understand. I don't think much of Le Havre. There are some splendid buildings, but I would not like to live here. . . . There is plenty of work for the troops, and we are all doing our best. . . . I have come across a few Inverness boys, and we had a chat about the days we used to spend together."

Not for long, however, did the Guards tarry at Harfleur. They were for the trenches—for the front line; for the points of greatest danger, where our line was weakest! And how often during these years of dreadful war did they wrest for us victory out of imminent disaster and defeat! Ernest Gillanders had his full share of the hardships and dangers of that awful time. He writes—

"3rd Nov.—c/o Lieut. V. Perowne, 2nd Batt. Scots Guards.—We are out resting just now, and very glad too, because we have had a big biff with Fritz, about which you will have read in the papers. . . . The caterpillars or tanks fairly put the fear of death into him. I got buried on the 24th, the night my officer (Mr. Fenner) was killed. I am glad to say that I am none the worse—only that I had a lot of ground on me which I could not get rid of."

When Ernest was buried in the shell explosion he was rendered unconscious, and he only came to himself on the application of restoratives, after his comrades had dug him out of the earth. Then he went straight back to his post of duty. But even the most robust of constitutions can at last be overtaxed. Lying on the wet ground, working in trenches with water over the ankles—with water to the waist!—who is strong enough to live through such a life unharmed?

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Rheumatic fever seized Ernest Gillanders and laid him low. Three weeks he lay in hospital in France; then for three months he was a patient in Brackley Hospital, Northampton.

This time of Ernest's life was perhaps the happiest he ever spent. The hospital was a private establishment, founded and administered by Mrs. A—— in one of her own mansion houses, for the behoof of the wounded soldiers. This lady was assisted by a large staff of voluntary helpers and nurses, who were unwearied in their kindness to the patients. The convalescent soldiers were often invited to house parties in neighbouring mansions, and no effort was spared to give the lads pleasure during their stay in Brackley. Mrs. A—— died in 1917, and we may venture to mention that one of her dying requests was that Ernest Gillanders should be asked to be present at her funeral. This last wish of his benefactress Ernest was proud to fulfil. It is pleasant also to record that the father and sister of Lieut. Fenner (who was killed at the time Ernest was buried in the shell explosion) motored all the way from London to Brackley Hospital to visit Ernest.

In February 1917 Ernest returned to duty in Wellington Barracks. In August he was sent back to the hardships and dangers of the war in France. In a letter he writes—

“You will have seen by the newspapers that we had a very hot time, but we managed to get rid of Fritz for the present. . . . I only wish that the war were finished, and that we were all back at work again. . . . The censor is very strict, so I can't say much, although I could say plenty.”

Ernest's health again gave way under the fearful strain, and in December he was taken to Horton War Hospital, Epsom. Here he experienced every kindness from nurses and visitors.

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He wrote on 2nd January 1918:—"The parcel sent to France for me I was unable to receive, as I was taken away from the battalion before it arrived, but I left word that any parcels which might arrive for me were to be handed to my pal, who has no friends, and who came from the wilds of America to do his bit for the old country; so the parcel will have reached grateful hands. I don't think I will have the luck to get my discharge, as the war will last a while yet. It would be a great pity to give up the job now, and let Fritz have the better of us."

Again Ernest recovered; again, in February, he returned to Wellington Barracks; and again, in September, he returned to France. This time he knew that the war was drawing near an end, and he looked forward to the day when peace would be established on a basis of honour and justice. His mother wrote to him inquiring if his rheumatics were better now, and he replied—"Don't say rheumatics, mother, for I want to be in at the end."

Alas! Ernest was not spared to see the end of the world conflict in which he had played his part so nobly. He fell at St. Hilaire on 11th October 1918, and he sleeps now in Delsaux Farm British Cemetery, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of Bapaume.

By his sterling, manly character, by his gentlemanliness and modesty, Ernest Gillanders won the respect and affection of all who knew him. We feel that the world is all the poorer to-day for the loss of our tall Highland lad. May we each and all strive to live in the light of the high ideals of honour and duty for which he laid down his life.

DAVID STUART

(AGED 18½),

PRIVATE (18596), 12TH ARGYLL AND SUTHERLAND HIGHLANDERS.

POSTED AS MISSING 19TH SEPTEMBER 1918.

DAVID STUART, apprentice compositor, entered our employment on 14th June 1915. After having received his schooling at Balfour Street Public School, he worked some little time with Band & Whyte and with George E. Findlay. One day he went home to his mother with the news that a card was displayed in our window, "Apprentice Compositor Wanted." "Will I go, mother?" was the boy's excited inquiry. "Certainly, Davie," the mother replied; and so he came to us. The boy was delighted with the printing trade; his heart and soul were in his work. He used to tell his father and mother about the men who worked around him, and he spoke about them in an old-fashioned way, "just as if they had been his own pals."

Davie loved to spend his leisure time in helping his father with the tending of his little plot at the Kinnaird Gardens. As he was also interested in music, his father, a musician by profession, had commenced to give him lessons in piano playing. On Saturday afternoons he attended the musters of the 19th Coy. Boys' Brigade, and on Sabbath evenings he was never absent from the Young Men's Bible Class at the Y.M.C.A.

The Great War burst upon the land, and in its dreadful march it interrupted the quiet and promising tenor of David Stuart's life. The idea of becoming a soldier was something which had never entered into his mind. The thought of war was utterly repugnant



DAVID STUART.

David Stuart

to him; but to be taken away as a conscript soldier, that he would not brook—"I'll join first," he told his father and mother. So on 5th June 1916, only seven days before the Derby scheme had run its course, Davie Stuart, in the company of his father, presented himself at the Albert Hall as a lad ready and willing to do his duty, even to go to war. There was a crowd of applicants at the hall that day, for the lads were hastening to enrol themselves as voluntary soldiers while yet they were in time. The father and son, therefore, had to wait their turn from 2 P.M. till after 4, when Davie was hurriedly examined and classified as an A1 man. He received in his hand 2s 9d for one day's pay and ration money. He swore loyalty to the service of the King, and he now knew that he belonged to the British Army.

Here follows a copy of the Attestation Card which was given to him—

Name,.....*Stuart, David*

No. *A/131.*

Address,.....*3 Mount Pleasant,*

Dundee.

Group Number *A.*

Date of Attestation, *5/6/16.*

The above-named man has been attested and transferred to the Army Reserve until required for service, when he will be sent a notice paper informing him as to the date, time, and place at which he is to report himself. Fourteen days' notice will be given.

N.B.—Any change of address should be immediately notified to the Recruiting Officer at 29 Nethergate.

Dundee Station,
5/6/16 Date.

THOS. M. CAPPON, *Major,*
Recruiting Officer.

For the time being Davie was free to return to his home and his work, but he lived now in daily expectation

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of being called up for service. At last the notice arrived, and in obedience to its summons Davie again presented himself at the Albert Hall. He joined the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, as at that time only the infantry regiments were open for recruits, and on 26th January 1917 at 10.40 A.M., full of youthful hope and courage, our young recruit left for Stirling, the headquarters of his regiment.

Davie was a good correspondent. From his many letters we can piece together with wonderful completeness the story of his army life. We must not omit to mention here what we have omitted in general from our extracts, that every letter to his dear ones at home breathes the utmost solicitude for their welfare and happiness. In every letter he inquires anxiously about his father's health, and constantly he urges him to hopefulness and good cheer. In every letter he expresses his loving affection to his mother, to his sisters Lottie and Nellie, and to his little brother Charlie. Here, however, we must content ourselves with his life in the army. First, as to his experiences in Stirling—

To his employers.—“14th Feb. 1917—I will tell you of my time in Stirling. I arrived there at 1 P.M. on Friday, 26th January, all on my own, and I felt very downhearted about it. I got my way up to the Castle, and discovered that my papers had not arrived from Dundee, so that meant that I had to sleep there that night. Oh! it was cold, and it was a dirty place. I slept with my civilian clothes on. The next day I was told that I would have to sleep there at nights till Monday (waiting for uniform). Every day after meal times I had to wash the dishes and scrub tables, then go to the officers' and sergeants' mess and do the same there.”

On the Monday Davie was sent to Redford Barracks, near Edinburgh, and now follow extracts from his letters from Redford.

David Stuart

To his father and mother.—“3rd Feb.—I received your most welcome letter on Friday night. You have no idea how it did brighten me up to get word from home. I am going away up to scrub out my bunk on my hands and knees, as it has to be done once a week here, and the chaps usually do it on Friday night (cleaning night). . . .

“In this place you have to keep your eyes about you at the feeding times or else you would be left, but so far I have always got my share, and sometimes a little more. You have to take butter with the left hand, and your bread with the right. The reason why I asked for a padlock is that the ones you get here are all the same, and open with the same key. Yesterday I was inoculated, and I am put on the sick list for two days. I just feel my arm a little stiff to work, but otherwise it is all right. I have a bunk up here all to myself, and it is not bad. Four blankets we get for our bed, and I put my greatcoat and tunic on top. I was at a concert last night at the Soldiers’ Home, and it was very good. I am meeting with some nice chaps here. Write a letter to me soon, as I want to hear how all are keeping at home.”

“5th Feb.—On Sunday we go on parade for the church at 9.30, and when we come back there is usually a kit inspection, and then we are finished at twelve o’clock for the day. As regards my washing, it is all done by the Edinburgh Laundry Co., so that is all right. At night we have to be in at 9.30, but when we have a late pass we are allowed out till midnight. If I am out to town on Saturday I will go and get my photo taken, and send some of the photos home. I hope you are both keeping in the best of health.”

“13th Feb. — To-day I was inoculated again — a double dose, as it is the last I will get. It was on the right arm, and with my vaccination on the left I have to lie on my back at nights, but it will soon be all right.”

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"14th Feb.—I received your most welcome letter last night. . . . About my kit, I have been served out with the Webb equipment (all canvas)—two broad belts, ten ammunition pouches, a haversack, water-bottle, and a pack for the back, which holds overcoat, socks, a shirt, and a canteen. You know what the canteen is; one of the half-round tins, I think, for holding tea when you are out marching. I have also a trenching tool, just a little spade. The rations are begun to be cut down here, but I can't grumble, as we get plenty food, and it is good. Cheer up, father; you will get better as the weather improves. Tell mother and Charlie that I send my best love to them."

To his employers.—"14th Feb.—I have at last got settled down here, but not to the soldier's life. I am not taking to it just yet, but it will come easier and better after some time, I hope. There is good accommodation here, and the food is very good and plentiful. We get five diets a day—breakfast at 8 A.M., soup and bread at 11 A.M., dinner at 1 P.M., tea at 5 P.M., then tea, biscuits and cheese at 7 P.M.; so you see we can't complain about the feeding. I have a little room to myself with a bed and an iron locker, and I can say that we need the locker, for there are a good number of lads ready to pick up anything they see lying about. There are good baths and reading and writing rooms inside the barracks, and outside there is a Y.M.C.A., where all men in uniform are made welcome. I have been served out with all my equipment. I have not got the rifle and bayonet yet, and I am in no hurry either, as it is a thing I don't like to handle, but I have been served out with dummy cartridges."

To his father.—"25th Feb.—I like to get a letter from you. I am sorry to hear that you are having a pretty bad time of it with your breath, but cheer up and look to the best side of it all. I was at Edinburgh last night, and was walking along Princes Street

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with a lad who sleeps next door to me when a man came over to us, and asked us up to a soldiers' meeting in Rose Street. We went, and we got tea and sandwiches and cakes and bread and butter, as much as we could take. After that there was a concert, with soldiers singing choruses. They are asking us up again next Saturday, and if I am in town I will go.

"I received the little note from Charlie, and I will never lose hold of it, as it was a nice little note. I am glad to hear that he is always singing and dancing as usual. I keep up my spirits and health all right, *as long as I get word from home, as it does do a lad good*. You'll know that, father."

"18th March—I have had to have my rifle cleaned thoroughly with boiling water three times a day. The bullets rust the barrel, and we must be constantly cleaning it. I finished my firing on Wednesday, and am in a training company now. I have to parade every morning with the kilt and full marching order; in the afternoon, with the trousers and skeleton order."

"28th March—Thanks very much for the stamps, as I was burst this week. I only got a shilling this week for pay, as I am two shillings in debt. They said that I was overpaid in Dundee when I left. I can't make any better of it. . . .

"We are getting the gas helmets now, and we have to go through gas with them on Tuesday. Oh, what a nasty smell the gas has! To-day we were running round the square with the helmets on, and a few lads had to fall out sick. Write soon again, as I like your letters."

"29th April—You ask how I am getting on—First-class. I am picked to go through a special course of signalling, which lasts four months. So you see I have landed lucky. Last Monday we were on night operations, and we had to bomb trenches with gas

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helmets on. On Saturday morning our squad of signalers and machine gunners had to go and load transport waggons and horses on the trains. Last Wednesday I did my first guard, two hours on and four off. I had to go on guard from 1 to 3, 7 to 9, then 1 to 3 in the morning, and 7 to 9. I was at the back post, and it was alive with rats all night. . . . I am to try to make myself efficient at the signalling. Mind and write, father, and enclose a few stamps, as that is what runs away with a good part of my three shillings."

Davie got his first leave on 26th May, and he came to see all his old friends. He said but little about his experiences in the army, but to his mother he spoke out freely. "Ach, mother," he said, "I dinna like it. I wish I was hame." Back to Redford, however, his duty called him.

"23rd Oct. — I am just this minute down from the dentist. I have to go back again on Thursday to try the teeth in, and then I'll not be long. A big draft left our place on Thursday, and I wish that I had gone with it, as it was for Egypt. They have been making a row about my waiting so long before complaining about my teeth. They say I should have been in France long ago, but they won't have long to wait for me now. There is only one place a little homely like, and that is the Soldiers' Home. I go to it nearly every night. You might write soon to me, father."

"28th Oct.—I expect to get a four days' leave, as all week-end leaves have been cancelled. Our C.O. told us that he has suggested to the War Office that men getting expeditionary leave should get eight days instead of four. We all gave the C.O. a good cheer, as he is a very decent man with us. If I get home I will have a day at the garden to see how it is still going, and I'll give you a hand at the digging. Last week I was in the garden in the barracks digging up the potatoes, and our squad lifted a few hundredweights that day."

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Davie, in due course, got his "expeditionary leave," and he was in Dundee from 3rd until 8th November. When he left his home for the last time, cheery always and tender-hearted, he did his best to soften the wrench of parting with his father, who was then confined to the house with illness. "Cheer up, father, I'll be back again—next week!" And at the railway station he tried again to cheer his mother—"Never mind, mother, cheer up." As the train prepared to start he kissed his mother once more and called to her, "Ta, ta, mother, I'll be back again—next week!" This was the last that these parents saw of the bright, good boy who all his life had never caused them a sore heart.

Now follow the last written messages from Edinburgh.

To his father and mother.—"12th Nov.—I am sitting in the Hut (Boys' Brigade, Y.M.C.A., the Mound, Edinburgh) writing this short note. This is a nice cheery draft that I'm in, and there are a few men returned from France in it, and they are happy that they are not going back to France. So cheer up, for the war won't last long now, seeing that we are going out."

"14th Nov.—Our draft was inspected to-day by the General, and we are ready for the road now. We are going to Salonica, as you know, and that's a pretty long journey in front of us. Be sure I'll write every opportunity I get to let you know how I'm getting along or where I am. Give my love to Lottie and Nellie and little Charlie. Good night all, and cheerio! How I wish that I was back beside you. I'll maybe send a little present to you, mother, for your Christmas."

Then the last note from Edinburgh on Tuesday afternoon—

"My dear loving Mother,—Just a few lines to tell you that we are leaving to-day at three o'clock. This is the time that a lad feels very homesick, and wishes he

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was home again for ever. I'm feeling that way just now. This is all just now, and keep up your heart, like me, for I hope I'll be back soon and this war finished.—Your ever loving son, David.”

Now Davie Stuart was off on his journey to the field of battle. Here is a letter from his port of embarkation—

To his mother.—“We have arrived here at Southampton after a long train journey. We left Edinburgh at 5.15 yesterday, and arrived here at 8.30 to-day. I am sitting on my kit writing this short note, and am just waiting word to go on board, but it may not be to-day that we shall sail. We are in the harbour sheds just now, and they are packed with men. Another train-load is coming into the station as this line is being written. Well, mother, this is all just now. I will write again when I get across to France.”

Next comes a letter to his employers from a certain place of which Davie has been forbidden to give the name. From now onward he writes on the Red Triangle Y.M.C.A. letter-paper, headed “On Active Service, British Expeditionary Force.”

“28th Nov. — I am taking the opportunity of writing these few lines to you to let you know that I am now far away from Scotland. Our draft left Edinburgh a week ago, and we reached Southampton next morning. We left the same night, and sailed across the Channel in darkness. We were on the water for eleven hours, and it was eleven hours of excitement, for we never knew the minute that disaster might overtake us. Anyway, we got across safely, and we were not sorry when we felt the solid earth under our feet again. We then had a march of three miles to a rest camp, and it was the hardest march that I ever mind of having. The road was in a terrible mess with mud and with Army Service Corps motors running up and down splashing the mud all over us, and we were in a pretty

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mess at the end of the march. However, after a wash we felt a little better, and we turned into bed and had a good rest. We stayed in the camp for two days, then we had a three nights' and two days' journey on the train right across France to this port. On some parts of the line we came out and had a walk alongside the train, so you can judge how quickly it went. And for bumps and knocking about, it was awful. I think that we are due this rest that we are having in the sunny part of France. There is a great difference between the north and south of France. Nothing but mud in the north, and nice sunny weather in the south. Hoping this finds all at Caxton House, like me, in the best of health."

To his father, evidently from the same port, the name of which we can guess from the letter.—"30th Nov. —This is a fine place here, as it is like our summer just now, and we have plenty of time to ourselves. We are lying in a rest camp about three miles from the town, but the cars go from here right to the centre of the town, and the soldiers get the whole journey for a penny. I was up to the town last night; it is well lighted, and it is a big town too. You would think that the people here had never seen a kiltie, as they all stand and look at the kilties and talk about them, but we do not know what they say, and it is maybe just as well. I would like if I could tell you the name of this place, but you can try with a map to see if you can get it. It has a big name with ten letters in it. We have nine men in a bell tent, but it gets very chilly at night, and we have three blankets and our overcoats on top of us, so we are all right. We can spend a fine evening in the Y.M.C.A. canteen and also in the Expeditionary Force dry canteen."

Here now is a note to a shopmate, and again it is not difficult to find out from what port it is written—"10th Dec.—I am writing this away in the centre

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of the Mediterranean Sea. We have had a good voyage; the weather has been nice and cool, and the sea very calm. It is fine to sit on deck with a book and read nearly all day. We get our rifles inspected daily at 10 A.M., then we have the day to ourselves. There are other two boats with us, and we have an escort of three destroyers—one a Japanese boat. . . . We get very little food; I think that is the reason very few have felt any sickness. One gets a good appetite when on the sea, and one has to look a little nippy at meal times, as everyone thinks he is being stinted. On Sunday night we sighted this land, where we have put up for a day or two, likely for coal or rations. You'll maybe know where we are: it's an island. Give my regards to all at Caxton House; and I wish you all 'A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!'"

Again to the same shopmate, and this time from No. 1 Base Depot, Salonica—"30th Dec.—I am not sorry that our sea travelling is finished. The last day and night of the voyage were terrible. We were caught in a storm; the waves were coming over the top of the boat, and it was knocked about awfully. A great number of the lads were very sick, but I am glad to say that I survived it all right. I lay on my back a good bit of the trip, and I think that kept me right. We arrived here on the 17th. There were two bands waiting for us, and they played us up a part of the road. We had a march of eight kilos to this camp. We are under canvas here, and we lie on the ground, as there are no boards in the tents. In the morning we feel a little sore, but it soon wears off. There is one good thing, however—the weather is fine. It is cold in the morning, but after 10 A.M. it gets nice and warm, and it remains so till about 8 P.M. On Christmas day we had a day off, and also a little extra food. We got a bit of plum duff, oranges, nuts, fags, and matches. So far, I am not an enthusiastic fag smoker."

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To his mother.—“3rd Jan. 1918—Every time a post is to be lifted the first thing I do is to start and write to you. I only wish I had a letter from you to see how you are all keeping. I hope you had a champion time of it at the New Year, and that you brought it in in a happy and cheery way. On Hogmanay night we sat up in bed till after twelve, and brought in the New Year as best we could. We didn't even have a drink of tea to bring it in. On New Year's night they started selling beer, and a good few of the men were a little tipsy. Be sure, mother, that I'll never touch any beer, but I'll tell you what I took. They came round with an issue of rum, and I took it, and I'll always take it, as it is very cold here at nights. We get it at 7 P.M., and what we get is a tablespoonful—a very little drop. I hope, mother, that you won't object, but, if so, I'll stop it. Let me know. Once again, I wish that I had a letter from home. Hoping this finds you in the very best of health, and also Lottie and Nellie and Charlie. Tell Charlie that I wish him 'A Happy New Year!'—Your ever loving son.”

One would have liked to know a little of what were Davie's experiences during the following six weeks, for the next letter was sent after he had joined his battalion, and his address then was “C Coy., 11th Platoon, 12th A. & S. Highlanders.”

He wrote to his father—“24th Feb.—We are still under canvas on a hillside, and at nights it's rather stormy, and we do not know the minute the tent is coming down on our top. Up to now I haven't got any letters from home, but I am looking for one every day now. I went down to a concert last night in the Y.M.C.A. tent, but I didn't manage to get in. There is a concert held every night in the Y.M.C.A., so I'll maybe be able to get in some other night. There seems to be plenty of sport among the troops out here, and football is the prominent game. The

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canteens out here are very good, and they sell nearly everything, and at low prices too."

Davie's next letter shows that he was now "on active service," indeed.

To his father.—"14th March—I am writing this in a dugout in the line. There are five men in the dugout, and we all spend a good time in writing letters. Things are pretty quiet up here, but at times the big guns are lively enough, and it gives you the creeps when you hear the shells 'swishing' overhead and at your side. There are also plenty of aircraft going about, and the shells fairly buzz round about them. So far I have not seen any of the aeroplanes being brought down. When we are up here we sleep during the day, and do duty at night from sunset to sunrise."

To a shopmate Davie complained of delay in receiving letters from home. Then a week later he wrote—"I am very glad to say that I am now getting all my long-looked-for letters. It was on the 21st March that the 'postie' called for me and handed me ten letters. On all the envelopes was stamped 'Address unknown,' so that is the reason why I have been so long in getting them; but 'All's well that ends well.'" These last words are characteristic of Davie's letters. He always finishes with a cheery remark when he finds that he has had to mention anything which is not quite pleasant and satisfactory.

Again, to the same shopmate he writes—"As you say, it will be a happy gathering when we are all back to 'Blighty' again. I am afraid that if there are any decorations going here's one who will not be among the recipients. They'll never worry me. The only thing that I am looking for is a suit of 'civies.' That would be better than anything else." He finishes the letter by saying, "We never can tell the minute we are to be shifted. We'll be in one place to-day, and by to-morrow—well, where are we?"

David Stuart

To his father.—“1st April—I see you have started to your onions again, and I hope they will turn out a success. I may say that I am now becoming a crack hand at the pick and shovel, as we go out digging nearly every day or night. Digging is the thing to bring blisters on the hands, and I can say that I have a few on my hands; so by the time I come home I will be an expert, and then I'll be able to plough up your garden. Once more we have been shifted, and we are now situated on the top of a big hill, and billeted in dugouts. Last Thursday we had a blizzard of snow and rain—very cold. We were not badly off though, seeing we were in dugouts. That's the worst of the weather here. One day it will be so warm that we can go about with very few clothes on, and the next day it will perhaps be very cold and snowing.”

In a letter to his employers on 12th April Davie says—“Convey my warmest thanks and gratitude to all at Caxton House for the splendid parcel they sent me. I hope they are all being kept very busy during these hard times. . . . Once a week we have to use up our iron rations, because if we left them untouched for a while they would soon become useless. The weather just now is very warm, and we go about during the day in shirt sleeves and short pants. At night time we get the use of one blanket, and it is quite sufficient, so you can see by this that it is indeed warm. The drawback about the warm weather is that it is the cause of malarial fever. Already it is starting to take its toll in our battalion, and a good few of our lads are *hors de combat*.”

“24th April—We are up in the front line again, and instead of being billeted in dugouts we are in bivouacs. They are far healthier than the dugouts during this kind of weather. The heat out here now is something awful. During the day we cover the ‘bivy’ with a blanket to keep the heat out, but it's not much

David Stuart

use. We do our parades now in shirt sleeves, short pants, and the sun helmet. Our kilts are to be taken from us, as they are far too heavy. Even when lying about inside the 'bivy' doing nothing the sweat pours out of the body. We are greatly bothered with that pest, the housefly. When we are at our meals it is something terrible, especially if there is any jam on the 'table.'"

To his father.—"4th May — We have had an easy time of it, and we are going out of the line for a rest. I can hardly write steadily, as we are almost off our heads with flies. We have been supplied with fly papers, and they are already covered. . . . At night the mosquitoes come out, and while on duty in the trenches they make you feel them. By Jove, they can bite! During the past two days and nights we had a heavy thunderstorm, and, as usual, plenty of rain along with it. It was miserable standing in the trenches, as there is no shelter. However, to-day the weather is glorious, and it enables us to get everything dried. We are now none the worse of it all."

"24th June — At present I am a good bit from the line, and am being taught how to deal with pigeons. When I go back to the battalion I think that I will be on the signalling work."

To his employers.—"19th Aug.—I would have written before, but we had to pack up and take to the road once more. It was a very long march to this place. We are now back in the trenches. I am glad to say that I have managed to get on the signalling now, and I am busy writing while on duty at the 'phone. I am liking it fine. In this place there are plenty of mice to keep us company."

Then to his father on 10th Sept. —"I received your very welcome letter of 4th August a week ago, and this has been my first opportunity of writing, as since then we have again shifted our camp. I am very glad to

David Stuart

say that I received the box all safe and sound, and it came just at the right time. I can tell you I enjoyed the gingerbread, shorties, and sweets, and I was very pleased with the socks. I hope this finds you a good deal better and still sticking in at the garden. Give my best love to all at home, and tell Charlie that I will write to him next time I write to mother. Glad to say I am still A1. Mind and write soon.—Your loving son, David."

That was David Stuart's last letter to his dear ones at home. To a shopmate in the first week of September he wrote a mere note saying that he had not received a parcel that had been sent out; saying also that they had just received word that there was a "stunt" coming off, and that when he got out of it perhaps his parcel would be waiting him. From a letter written on the 19th September by one of his platoon chums it was learned that the parcel had arrived, but, alas! Davie Stuart was not there to claim it.

In the lists of the men reported as "Wounded and missing—19th Sept. 1918" appeared the name "David Stuart, 18596." His parents were thrown into a state of painful suspense. What had befallen their boy, and where was he now? A letter was dispatched to Davie's superior officer asking for particulars as to the fate of the lad, and in course of time the following reply was received:—

16th Nov. 1918.—David was last seen badly wounded in one arm lying on a portion of the battlefield of which the Bulgars subsequently gained possession for a short time, but still long enough for them to carry off several of our fellows as prisoners. Your son is a signaller, and one signaller who was certainly working along with him has since come back, and men are coming in almost every day. An exhaustive search of the battlefield was made after our advance, and no trace of your son

David Stuart

was found, so that we still have hopes that he may be in a Bulgar hospital. I sincerely hope that he is, because as his platoon officer I can tell you how much all the men miss the cheery fair-haired little boy. He had not been with us for long, but he was very much liked by all ranks, and he was a splendid little worker. I will write you whenever I hear more about him.—Yours sincerely,

H. WATSON, Lt.

Alas ! the “cheery, fair-haired little boy,” the “splendid little worker,” was never seen again. One of his comrades came home in course of time, and he related to the grief-stricken parents that he was present when Davie was wounded in the arm. The wound was tied up by one of the Red Cross men, but darkness came down suddenly, and it was found necessary to leave Davie lying on the ground. The boy himself urged his comrades to go. “Never mind me, boys,” he said, “I’ll be all right”; and so they left the little hero, brave-hearted and cheery and unselfish to the very last.

So David Stuart will remain in the hearts of his loved ones, and in the memory of all who knew him—a bright, brave spirit of ever-cheery hopefulness and considerateness for others, an affectionate and dutiful son, a loving brother, and a hero in the unselfish performance of his duty.

JAMES F. ANDERSON

(AGED 18),

PRIVATE (89270), No. 2 MALTA COMPANY, R.A.M.C.

JAMES ANDERSON, stationer, commenced his apprenticeship with us in the year 1911. He came fresh from his schooling in the Morgan Academy, and he became a journeyman in the end of last year, the usual allowance of time having been made for the four years which he spent in the army.

In his youthful ardour James would have liked to join the army at the outbreak of hostilities, but as he had not yet reached the prescribed age he was obliged to wait until 19th April 1915, when, with the consent of his parents, he enlisted at Douglas Street Drill Hall in the 2nd/3rd Highland Field Ambulance R.A.M.C. (T.). In that same hall James learned to "form fours," and he received some training in ambulance work until 8th May, when his unit was transferred to the camp at Scone, and was attached to the Gordon Brigade of Highlanders. James was fated on the very night of his arrival in camp to be told off for guard duty. He will never forget the rather stiff experience for a new recruit of marching to and fro that moonless night (two hours on and four hours off) amid the scampering rats of the ash heaps and the mysterious trees of the awesome forest. He laughs yet as he tells you how he began his sentry-go by tumbling ignominiously over a guy rope of a tent. He took care to avoid that rope the next time he came marching round that way.

Here in Scone James's days were passed in a steady routine of foot drill and ambulance drill, fatigue duty

James F. Anderson

and guard duty, varied with route marches and brigade field work. On brigade days the medical officer, in order to give practice to the R.A.M.C. recruits, scattered the infantry here and there to impersonate wounded men. Each of these men had a label fastened to his tunic pocket indicating the nature of his supposed injury, and he laid himself down in any odd corner to await the coming of assistance. Our ambulance lads then searched around for these wounded men, and in scientific fashion they bound up the injuries with improvised bandages and splints in order to stop the bleeding and relieve the pain. What could they improvise for this work? Well, their puttee perhaps, or their handkerchief or neckerchief would act as a bandage; while a branch broken from a tree would serve for a splint, with grass for the necessary padding. Thereafter the patient had to be lifted over the barbed wire fence and carried on the stretcher to the dressing station, where the doctors were waiting to fix him up properly and make him ready for the ambulance van. If the case was not a serious one, however, the man was allowed to make his way on foot to the doctors.

On rainy days the medical officer used to lecture in the big marquee, making blackboard drawings of the heart and the principal blood vessels, showing in which way the blood flowed and in what way a bleeding could best be stopped. Dismissed at four o'clock in the afternoon, the ambulance men were free to spend the evenings as they pleased. Altogether the life which James spent in the tents at Scone was a very pleasant one. The work was interesting, and it was most educative for any sphere of life. He particularly enjoyed the route marches in the summer sunshine round by Kinnoull Hill, Murrayshall, Bonhard, and Meikleour. What could better be than the rhythmic tramping through the fresh air in a lovely country amid singing comrades?



JAMES F. ANDERSON.

James F. Anderson

On 26th September James and his comrades left camp for a long march through the country we all know so well—*via* Old Scone, Guildtown, and Beech Hedges to Blairgowrie Golf Course, where they camped for the night. Thereafter they tramped by daily stages to Bridge of Cally, to Kirkmichael, and to the hills above Pitlochry. Here the scouting men in front signalled with their flags that an enemy was approaching from the west. See now the military manoeuvres developing as the armies draw near to one another. Rifle volleys ring out sharp and fast upon the hillside. The gallant soldiers are dropping all around, a label having previously been pinned upon each tunic to tell whether head or arm or leg has been shattered by the fusilade. The ambulance men run forward and do their best for the wounded, while the doctors stand in readiness at their dressing station to inspect and correct the dressings. Meanwhile the field kitchens are busy at their task of preparing the evening meal. In a short time you will see the whole company, friend and foe together, mingled in a happy brotherhood, sitting upon the fragrant heather, drinking tea and talking over the day's exploits until the shades of night begin to close down upon the scene.

Where did they sleep, think you, these lads upon the Highland hills? James tells us that every infantryman had brought with him his waterproof sheet, his blanket, and his bivouac pole (about a yard in length). With these it was an easy matter for a pair of handy men to rig up a little tent in which to pass the night. One pole was driven into the ground at the head, and another at the foot; then a waterproof sheet was stretched from one pole to the other, and was pinned down at the sides with pegs or stones. On the floor of this little wigwam one man spread out his waterproof sheet and blanket; his comrade crawled in beside him, and finished by drawing his blanket over them both.

James F. Anderson

On this occasion rain began to fall at two o'clock in the morning, but the lads beneath their humble tents were fairly dry, and they slept on unheeding. Men who had scorned to set up a bivouac tent had perforce to rise from the wet ground and walk about until the day had come. Camp was struck at 8.30, and by way of Pitlochry, Ballinluig, and Dunkeld the home camp at Scone was reached in due course.

At the end of October our ambulance men left Scone to be billeted in the public school at Alyth, and there they remained over the winter. Rather wearisome these months were, for there was little change in the daily routine. The people of the neighbourhood, however, were exceedingly kind, welcoming the lads wherever they went, and trying in every way to make them feel at home. Here James was occupied with the horses of the Transport Section, but he sometimes had the opportunity of watching the Royal Engineers at their interesting work of building pontoon bridges across the Isla, and also at the laying of their telephone wires along the hedges.

In March 1916 the whole of the 64th Highland Division was gathered in to Norwich. As the 192nd Brigade formed part of that Division, our young friend and his ambulance comrades were roused one morning at three o'clock to convey the stores to the station. Twenty-nine hours it took to transfer the party from Alyth to Norwich, for there was a halt at Stirling and again at Carlisle to feed and water the horses. There was delay in the Midlands also, where the utmost caution had to be observed on account of sundry German aeroplanes having made their appearance in the sky.

In Norwich our ambulance transport of some thirty men were accommodated in the upstairs hall of a "tea garden." This was a delightful abode, for it looked out upon the river, which was gay with summer visitors

James F. Anderson

enjoying pleasure trips in rowing and motor boats. Ordinary routine of drill went on here until May, when the ambulance men were transferred to the summer camp at Taversham, some five miles out of Norwich. James tells us that the usual programme of his daily duties in Taversham was somewhat as follows:—Rise when the whistle blows reveille at 6 A.M., parade at 6.30 for physical drill, breakfast at 7, clean buttons and boots and clear up tent, parade for drill at 8.30, dinner at 12.30 P.M., route march 2 till 4—after which he was finished for the day, unless detailed for guard duties. Football matches, sports, and concerts filled up the summer evenings.

German air raids were of frequent occurrence in these parts. Indeed, it seemed as if the Germans aimed for Norwich every time they crossed the Channel. After dark, therefore, all lights were forbidden. As the tents found their only safety in silence and darkness, anyone found striking a match in the street at night was arrested and fined. The men were taught to lie still and quiet, and so the raiders flew harmlessly past.

Suddenly a medical inspection was ordered, and the whole unit of 250 men was passed for Mesopotamia. James came home to Dundee to say good-bye to his friends, and returned to camp only to find that the men were to be transferred to the regular R.A.M.C., and to be sent to Codford, Wiltshire.

James found his work there very different from that to which he had been accustomed. He was in the regular army now, and he had to learn something of army sternness. "If the commanding officer," as James told us, "found that he could pinch a hair of your head, he packed you off for a haircut, and punished you besides with perhaps half an hour's pack drill, which meant walking or racing around with a full load of equipment on your back."

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In the middle of November James and his fellows were told that they had been included in a draft, not for Mesopotamia but for Malta. They boarded ship at Devonport on 9th December, and next day they sailed down the Sound, only to be signalled back to anchorage by a destroyer which appeared on the scene. Then followed a wearisome fifteen days on board their ship, the "Euripides," which was packed with troops for the East. At last, on Christmas morning, the vessel finally got under weigh. It took a roundabout way of reaching Malta, for it hugged round the coast of the south of England, sailed up the Bristol Channel and across by Lundy Isle to the Irish shore; then from the coast of County Galway it made round for Gibraltar, which was reached on 30th December. There was no leave for the men to land at Gibraltar, for the "Euripides" steamed off again in the afternoon of the same day, and, with its escorting destroyer, directed its course along the southern shore of the Mediterranean, past the coasts of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis.

On the morning of the 2nd of January 1917 Malta was sighted, and in the afternoon the provost-marshal in charge of the military police on board ship told the men they might lay aside their lifebelts, as the journey was now safely accomplished. Then between the frowning lines of guns which project from the great concrete forts, the vessel steamed into the magnificent harbour of Malta. Immediately on coming to anchor the ship was surrounded by a crowd of Maltese traders in their little dghaisas or rowing boats. Nimble chaps these merchants were, with their bare feet and bare heads; and they knew how to do business, and how to tempt the jaded travellers with their store of oranges and dates and cigarettes. To the soldier on the deck they flung up a rope; the soldier by means of the rope pulled up the merchant's empty basket, put

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his money therein, and again lowered the basket for his money's equivalent in oranges or other dainties.

Next morning James and his ambulance friends were paraded on deck and inspected by no less a personage than His Excellency the Governor of the Islands of Malta and Gozo, Field-Marshal Lord Methuen. Thereafter they proceeded down the gangway to the tug in waiting, landed in front of the Custom House, and marched up the hill to Floriana Hospital. On the way our lad could not but observe some of the sights which are characteristic of the streets of Malta. He wondered much to see the flocks of goats wandering about unattended, picking up the scraps of garbage and refuse thrown out from the doors of the houses. Strange also to British eyes were the big black hoods which the women folks were wearing. These hoods, or "faldettas," are the established headgear of the women of Malta, but the younger ladies are now discarding this fashion for a style of head-dress more in accordance with English taste.

On entering Floriana Hospital the first person James met was an old school chum, an orderly in the R.A.M.C. The two lads, however, were not to have the pleasure of working side by side, for next morning James was detailed off, with about a dozen others, to the St. Andrew's Hospital, seven miles distant, at the Sliema side of the island. This hospital was principally occupied with dysentery and malaria cases from Salonica and the Dardanelles. It consisted of nine separate blocks of buildings, with 144 beds in each, besides the usual quarters for the doctors and nurses. It also comprised a canvas hospital for overflows of patients, and tents for the accommodation of the R.A.M.C. men, four men to each tent.

Here now in St. Andrew's Hospital, Malta, James Anderson did his bit for his country. Appointed as a storeman in the linen store, for two long years he was

James F. Anderson

kept at this post, and he performed his important duties to the approval of all concerned. We asked him if he ever had time for any sightseeing in Malta, and he told us that in the early days of his work he did have a little respite from time to time, when he took the opportunity to explore the town—the Italian quarter, the Spanish quarter, and the Greek quarter. He also saw something of the subterranean quarter, but there it is not considered safe for a stranger to go without the escort of a policeman, otherwise the stranger might never be seen again. He visited the great Church of Malta, the third in the world for size, and he gazed with wonder on its gorgeous paintings and windows and statuary, and its priceless treasures of gold and silver plate and sacred relics which are laid out for exhibition only once a year. James went frequently to walk in the St. Antonio Public Gardens—they were so lovely. He liked to look at the orange trees laden with their juicy fruit, and to admire the great glass-houses with their flowers rich and rare.

James will never forget a certain place in Malta which was pointed out to him—that memorable spot where St. Paul once preached to the natives of Melita. We all remember how the shipwrecked prisoner came safely to the shore, and how, as he said himself, “the barbarous people showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.” All honour be to them for this kindly act.

As time went on James’s duties became more pressing, and he had little relaxation from work. He had always to be at call, and it seemed to him, especially at the time of the influenza epidemic, that his work never ceased, day nor night, Sabbath nor Saturday. Each morning, with the help of his Maltese assistants, he issued to the various blocks of the hospital the supplies of the fresh, clean linens which

James F. Anderson

would mean so much to many a distressed sufferer. The remainder of his day was spent in making up hospital kits, to be held in readiness for the arrival of the next shipload of wounded men from the battlefields.

The war came to an end at last, and slowly the flood of stricken humanity began to subside. Eventually, in the middle of February 1919, St. Andrew's Hospital was closed, and James Anderson was set free to return to his home. Handing over his stock of goods to the Ordnance Stores, James left Malta on 12th March, and journeyed by way of Taranto (Italy) overland to Harfleur Camp, where he was submitted to the usual process of disinfection. Thence he travelled *via* Le Havre and Southampton, arriving in Dundee on the afternoon of Thursday, 27th March, to be welcomed by his family circle and friends, and to resume his former civilian duties.

We close by giving a copy of James's demobilisation certificate, as it bears gratifying testimony to the valuable work on which he was so long engaged—

To Pte. J. F. Anderson, R.A.M.C.

You are returning to England for demobilisation, and about to resume your duties in civil life.

I appreciate and thank you for the services you have so ungrudgingly rendered to the nation and the army, and wish you happiness and prosperity in the future.

Good-bye and Godspeed.

METHUEN, *Field-Marshal*,

Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

Malta, 27th Feb. 1919.

GORDON CAMERON

(AGED 31),

PRIVATE (95227), R.A.M.C.

GORDON CAMERON, stationer, came to Caxton House in June 1915 to take the place of Ernest Gillanders, who had enlisted in the Scots Guards. Gordon is of Highland blood, as one might gather from his name. He was born in Kelso, but his father was from Lochiel! The latter died when Gordon was only three years old, and the mother removed to Edinburgh, so that her family might have better opportunities for obtaining suitable employment than in a small country town like Kelso.

Gordon in due time was sent to South Bridge School, to London Street School, and then for eighteen months to finish in the Royal High School, Musselburgh.

School days being ended, Gordon must now look around for work. He applies for four situations all at once—a stationer's, a printer's, a chemist's, and a draper's—and he is accepted for them all! He elects to try the chemist's shop for a career, and during all the first forenoon he carries firewood for his master. At the dinner hour Gordon's mother listens to the boy's report, and she rebels. Her boy is not to be a chemist any longer, so that afternoon the chemist waits in vain for his new message boy. Next morning Gordon puts in an appearance at the great printing office which has offered to train him as a compositor. He runs messages there till Saturday, but during these three days he learns privately that the former boy was made to run messages for two long years before he was allowed to commence his apprenticeship, so Gordon goes not back



GORDON CAMERON.

Gordon Cameron

to the printing office. He next tries the stationer's situation, and now he finds his vocation in life. He serves his time with a respected firm. He is employed for six or seven years with another good firm; then he comes to Caxton House, where he is at present.

Gordon was resident in Edinburgh when the war broke out, and at once he had the inclination to join the colours. His companions began to go away, his own brother enlisted in the A.S.C., and he (unmarried then) must also take his place in the ranks. The record of his persevering endeavours to find entrance into the army is interesting, and rather surprising to a civilian. Here is the story—

In the beginning of September 1914 Gordon Cameron applies for admission into, of course, the Cameron Highlanders. He goes along to Cockburn Street Recruiting Office, fills up a form giving his name, age, &c., and he is sent upstairs to the medical room for examination. There he waits for a long time, but at last the sergeant admits him into a large room, screened with sundry partitions. He is told to undress, is weighed and measured, and is placed before the doctor. The eye test comes first. The sergeant stands behind him, and holds a card before Gordon's left eye. The doctor bids him read the letters on another card some distance off. The top line, in big letters, is easy; the next line is possible to read; but Gordon can read no more of the smaller lettering. He is walked forward till he can read the next line, and the next, and the next; but towards the bottom of the card he can barely read the smaller letters till his eyes are on the paper. The doctor is evidently annoyed, and he calls out loudly, "You're no use!" "Eyesight 0·66," or something like that, he shouts to the clerk at the table. "Dress and go," he curtly adds to Gordon Cameron.

Gordon goes downstairs, and the man at the door

Gordon Cameron

asks him how he got on. Gordon tells him that his eyes have failed him. "Oh," says the man at the door, "if you're anxious to go have a try at something else. Try the H.L.I.; they are not up to strength yet."

Gordon finds his way to the H.L.I. in the same building, and goes through the same proceeding with the same result and the same abrupt dismissal.

Now it happened that just at this time Sir George Macrae, one of the leading men of the Territorials, was raising in Edinburgh a battalion of men who had never been in the Territorials—a kind of citizens' battalion of men who might wish to keep together. So at the recruiting office in the Old Palace Hotel, corner of Castle Street, Gordon makes another trial, only again to be dismissed with not too great civility.

Later on Sir George Macrae raised another company to act as reinforcements for his first battalion. Gordon again tries to enter, and again he is rejected.

Next the 9th Royal Scots, Claremont Terrace, announced that it was open for recruits. Gordon again fills up his papers, but this time he is not asked to strip until the eyesight test is taken. Again the doctor turns him away. Gordon tries to plead his case. He knows his eyes are weak, he says, but he has come in the hope that he may be taken for home service, perhaps. The doctor is inexorable. He is not to waste time with him, he says, for they are as strict in the territorials as in the regulars.

Lastly Gordon tries his fortune with the Seaforths in Cockburn Street. The man at the door gives him good encouragement by telling him that "the Seaforths are not so particular about the head, the principal thing for them is the teeth!" So Gordon fills up his papers once more. He is sent upstairs with the advice—"Say nothing; take your papers and hand them to the medical officer." Alas! the medical officer will have none of him, and he comes away disheartened. He has

Gordon Cameron

a suspicion now that these blunt medical men think that he is only shamming, and that he is trying to evade service rather than seeking to enter it.

This was the end of Gordon's Edinburgh experience; from that time he is under our roof in the Cowgate of Dundee. Soon, however, comes a post card from the 4th Black Watch, asking him to call at the recruiting office, High Street. There he sees Captain Moon, tells his story, is asked if he is willing to appear before Major MacGillivray and abide by his decision. Gordon agrees, and is promised that if he is dismissed again he will receive a rejection certificate to save him from further annoyance. Captain Moon takes him along to Major MacGillivray in Tay Street, glasses are put on his eyes, lenses are tried and changed for other lenses, and the result, after an exhaustive test, is that the eyes have absolutely no disease, but are simply "shortsighted." But for the eyes, Gordon is "physically fit for any fighting unit."

Now to the Ward Road Drill Hall, which is crowded with would-be recruits. Gordon gets preference this time, is again inspected, and now, on 22nd November 1915 he receives his rejection certificate.

But Gordon is not yet finished with the army. In the beginning of 1916 the first Military Service Act comes into operation. Gordon is called up; he shows his certificate, and he is dismissed.

Some months later the second Military Service Act takes effect, when "all previous rejects have to present themselves for re-examination." Gordon appears at the Albert Hall, he is again inspected by three doctors, he is passed Category B2, and is recommended for the R.A.M.C.

So at last the army is open to receive our man, and he is not long in accepting its invitation. The very next night Gordon is along at the recruiting office in Nethergate, and he is entered to leave Dundee on

Gordon Cameron

19th October, with a respite of seven days extra leave to put his affairs in order, for he was married a year ago, and his house was still in Edinburgh. Another call he makes to the recruiting office. He receives his railway warrant to take him to Sheffield, which is to be his training centre; receives two days' pay at 2s 7d per day = 5s 2d (the other five days' pay to lie meantime at his credit); receives also in his hand the handsome sum of sixpence for "travelling expenses," so that he may be able to buy something to eat and drink by the way!

The 25th October 1916 sees Gordon leave Edinburgh at 10 P.M. for Sheffield, where he arrives at 4.30 next morning. He does not yet know the precise address of his future habitation, and as the hour is too early to knock up the residents of the town to make inquiries, he sits patiently in the waiting-room until six o'clock. Then he sallies forth to look for breakfast. The hour is yet too early for the restaurants, and he has perforce to wander aimlessly till eight. Shops now begin to open, and in one he gets his breakfast. In another—a hairdresser's (and this concerns our story)—he treats himself to a haircut and a shave, that he may be spick and span when he enters upon his military life. Then he wanders again along the Sheffield streets, enjoying his last hours of liberty. He has dinner at 12.30, and now it is time to find out where he is to lodge that night. So to a policeman he applies for information. He has come, he says, from Scotland to join the R.A.M.C.—where must he report himself? The policeman cannot exactly answer the question, but he suggests that Gordon might go to a certain hospital. Gordon takes the car to this hospital, which is situated in the outskirts of the town, only to find that he has been misdirected, and that he must return to Sheffield to make inquiry at the Corn Exchange, then used as a recruiting office. At the

Gordon Cameron

Corn Exchange Gordon learns that he must report at Hillsborough Barracks, also in the outskirts of the town.

Hillsborough Barracks seemed to be a huge, dreary, dismal place as our man approached it in the shades of that October evening, and when he entered the guard-room and saw the orderly-sergeant at his table he felt as if he were going into a prison. "Why are you so late?" demanded the sergeant, "I have been expecting you all day."

Papers duly inspected, Gordon is handed over to a corporal, who leads him to the quartermaster-sergeant, from whom he receives an enamelled plate and basin, also a knife, fork, and spoon. With these articles in his hands, Gordon is now introduced into the big barrack-room, which serves as dining-room, sleeping-room, and recreation room for the twenty-four men who inhabit it. The room is full when he enters—full of men reading and writing and talking. There is also an individual playing an accordion. Every eye turns on Gordon when he speaks, and in a flash they know that he is a north country man. One man only had come from Scotland—an Edinburgh chap, the regimental barber—"and this," says Gordon, "made things a bit easier for me." The others were all Englishmen.

"Will you have tea?" asked the corporal; and Gordon replied that he "could do with some tea." "A messenger was sent over to the cook-house with my basin," says Gordon, "and he came back with what he called tea, but when I saw it I preferred to go without it." Our man was homeless now, certainly, but he was not yet broken in. Gordon was next taken up to the quartermaster's stores for his bedding, and soon he returned bearing a great burden of three "biscuits" (mattresses), three blankets, and one bolster, with which he made up his bed in the one remaining corner of the room. The corporal then left him, and he

Gordon Cameron

tried to bring himself into harmony with his new surroundings.

Back, however, came the corporal with a command from the quartermaster—

“The new recruit has to have his hair cut.”

“But,” protested Gordon, “I had my hair cut this morning between nine and ten o’clock.”

“That doesn’t matter,” said the corporal, “it isn’t short enough; and if it hadn’t been so late you would have had a bath, too. Every new recruit must have his hair cut and a bath.”

So Gordon had to submit, and in the midst of all that medley of reading and writing and talking and accordion playing he was shorn again!

That operation finished the day, and our man retired to rest. He felt far from home that night, he says, but he was now becoming more resigned. At 9.30 the orderly sergeant came round to make sure that all were in bed, except those who were out on special duty.

At six o’clock next morning the bugle blew reveille, and Gordon rose refreshed. Rowan the barber showed him how to make up his bed, and took him out to the barrack square for the 6.30 parade. Gordon, however, had had no previous training in drill, and he thought it wise to retire indoors for this first morning, leaving the company at their movements. The unit was called a “company,” but at that time it comprised 400 or 500 men.

Breakfast followed at 7.30. We asked Gordon how it was managed. “Oh,” he said, “each of us passed up our basin and plate to the end of the table, and they came back with the tea and the bacon. Perhaps a man didn’t get the same vessel returned as he sent up, but in the army one must not be too fastidious. A basket with tremendously thick slices of bread was then passed round.”

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At nine o'clock Gordon and a few others were led to the quartermaster's stores for uniform and equipment, after which they retired to their "bedroom" to dress. They looked splendid in their new uniform, and the orderly sergeant marched the squad of eight or nine lads to the colonel for inspection. After that gentleman had given the new men some good advice, the sergeant called out sharply, "Right turn! Forward—march!" and the little company filed out after their military leader as best they could. No sooner were they outside the door than the sergeant told the recruits to make themselves scarce for the rest of the day, and to keep out of the colonel's sight. Their work proper would begin on the morrow.

The next day, therefore, drill commenced in earnest, and it continued with spirit from day to day. Afternoons from two o'clock were devoted to lectures by the medical officers, different lectures in different rooms, according to the stage which a man might have reached. Our new recruits opened wide both ears and eyes when their medical officer commenced his lecture on "The Bones of the Body." He had an actual skeleton lying before him—in a box—on the table! He lifted up each separate bone, named it, lectured upon it, and passed it round for his audience to see and handle.

At 3.30 these various classes were combined into one great audience to hear the colonel's interesting and instructive lectures on such subjects as "The Digestive System," "The Respiratory System," "The Circulation," &c. The recruits followed the lectures with their "R.A.M.C. Green Book" in their hands, and they read up the subject afterwards at their leisure.

Twice a week the company had a route march, from 10.30 A.M. until 3.30 P.M., resting for ten minutes every hour. Gordon enjoyed these marches immensely, for he had not been much of a walker, and he had never

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known the delight and exhilaration of a long, hearty tramp in the open air, surrounded with jolly comradeship. They had to be stiff and regimental in their bearing, these lads, while in town, but out in the country all restraint was thrown off, and they talked and laughed and sang and whistled to their hearts' content. When the party returned there was a good dinner awaiting them; and in the evening it was delightful to settle down to a quiet study of their "Green Book," a manual of helpful instructions for the R.A.M.C.

Gordon highly valued the society of his comrades, for there were many well-informed men amongst them. Some were even capable of taking over a lecture from the medical officer if he happened at any time to be over-pressed with work. Some were professional pianists, organists, or vocalists, so there was no lack of good music. A concert party was formed, which gave concerts weekly to large audiences in a church hall in Sheffield—admission free!

So time rolled on very pleasantly until 20th December, when the whole company was transferred to Blackpool. Stretchers and bandages and splints now made their appearance, and the men drilled with these on the sands of the seashore, and listened to the lectures of the medical officers in the halls of the Blackpool Pleasure Grounds. These lectures Gordon felt to be a most profitable and educative part of his training.

At last Gordon's unit, 135 strong, was summoned to France. One-half of the unit was sent off to Aldershot for stores; the others travelled direct to Southampton to await these stores on the wharf—two hundred tons of beds, and bedding, and bandages, and splints, and medical appliances, and drugs, all packed up in huge, unwieldy bales! Gordon will never forget the task of unloading the waggons and hauling and hustling

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and rolling these great bales to the side of the vessel. There the steam winches were brought into operation, and in big, strong nettings the stuff was lifted over the side and lowered into the gaping hold.

On 29th April 1917 the vessel steamed from the wharf. In the afternoon of the next day the men were landed at Le Havre, and were marched to "Cinder City." This was a dreary waste heap of no good repute, for, as Gordon says, "you may wash yourself there all day, and you will never be clean. Your tent and your clothes will be filled with the cindery dust, and in windy weather all this will be ten times worse." Here Gordon had his first experience of tent life, which was far from pleasant.

In a few days orders came to move, and our R.A.M.C. men made haste to strike their camp. Gordon can tell many a story of his weary journey from "Cinder City" up the valley of the Somme to Villers Brettoneux—of the airy cattle trucks in which he travelled, of the absurdly slow rate at which the train was crawling, of the unconscionable delays at any place and every place. But here we must push on with our narrative.

Villers Brettoneux was reached in two days, and orders were given to unload the ambulance stores from the train into the dozen of motor lorries which were waiting to convey them to the hospital at Gailly, seven kilos distant. The lads set themselves to the work of hustling the bales on board the lorries. As each of these was filled it ran off with its load, returning for a fresh supply, until the bales were all gone. It only remained for the R.A.M.C. to jump on board the lorries and be rolled swiftly and merrily to their destination.

Gordon Cameron and his comrades of the R.A.M.C. had now arrived at the "13th Casualty Clearing Station," where they were to take over the buildings and fit them up as the "41st Stationary Hospital." This was the

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reason why our lads had brought with them such a huge quantity of baggage.

For the first week or two after their arrival our ambulance men had no lack of work, for there were thirty or forty wooden huts to be put in order, some of them to be furnished with beds and bedding, others to be arranged as mess-rooms, store-rooms, &c.

As things were quiet at the battle-front in those days, the first patients in the new hospital were mostly sickness cases. This was, therefore, a good time for Gordon to begin his hospital work. He was first posted to night duty in the medical ward. He was rather anxious when he entered upon his first night's vigil, but he soon saw he would have very little to do. The two day orderlies, before going off duty at 8 P.M., gave him some useful hints regarding the patients. It was the custom also for the day sister to enter in the "treatment book" any special orders which the doctor had given in regard to serious cases. This "treatment book" was always consulted by the night orderly when he came on duty.

About 10 o'clock or 11.30 the medical officer paid his last visit for the day, when he asked if any new cases had come in since the night orderly had taken up duty. The night sister also came into the ward occasionally during the night to see that all was in order. Supper being ready at twelve o'clock, Gordon at that hour ran across to the cook-house to bring over his rations of roast beef, cabbage, potatoes, pudding, and a cup of tea, all of which he was expected to consume in the little kitchen at the end of his ward. At 6 A.M. the two day orderlies resumed work, the night orderly being then free for the day.

In relating to us the routine of his nursing duties, Gordon Cameron divulged a little secret which he will allow us to confide to our readers. On that first night in hospital, as the patients were all so quiet and

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peaceful, Gordon set himself down on a chair at the end of the ward and took up a book to while away the time in reading. Sitting there in the dusky quietness of a ward of sleeping patients, would any man, after a hearty supper, have possessed will-power enough to remain alert and bright? Gordon thinks he must surely, just for an instant, have permitted his heavy eyelids to close, for the first thing he knew was that the night sister was standing before him, and she was scolding him roundly for disturbing the ward!

After two nights of the medical ward, Gordon was detailed off to the acute surgical ward, a room with some twenty-eight beds. He remembers that when he came on duty the day orderlies reported that there were two very bad cases which would require a good deal of attention. There had been an accident with a bomb. A sergeant and a corporal had been very badly injured, and the corporal had had his right hand amputated that very day. Gordon, therefore, was instructed to keep his eye on these men during the night. He turned to the "treatment book," but all he found there was the direction to give a sip of water occasionally. He already knew that if any of the patients became worse he must call the head night nurse to attend to the ward, while he ran to the medical officer's quarters with his report.

No sooner had Gordon taken his seat at the end of the ward than the sergeant gave a whistle to call for attention. He wanted a drink of water; his bandages were loose; his bed was uncomfortable. Gordon put things to rights, soothed the poor fellow as best he could, and again retired to his chair. Again the sergeant calls. He is restless; he is uneasy; his mind is wandering; he is disturbing the ward. Gordon tries again to soothe and hush the sufferer, and again retires, only again to be called. The other patients are grumbling at the disturbance; they can get no sleep. They

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bid the sergeant hold his peace. So the long hours of night roll slowly and restlessly on. Gordon had no tendency to close his eyes at his post that night, nor indeed for two or three weeks to follow. He tells us that at last the doctor found it needful to prescribe a sleeping draught for the poor sufferer, and then the ward found itself in wonderful peace. In course of time, when the sergeant began to recover a little, it was observed that he had acquired an undue liking for the drug—he could not sleep, he said, without his medicine. Every night when Gordon entered the ward the sergeant signalled for his sleeping draught, until at last the sister said they would require to break him off this bad habit. So Gordon, under direction, and feeling guilty at heart, made up a strong dose of salt and water, which one night he boldly handed to the patient in lieu of the usual sleeping draught. The trustful sergeant tossed it off, made a wry face with the remark that it had “a terrible taste” that night, lay down on his pallet, and slept like an infant for three good hours! The sergeant recovered, Gordon is glad to tell us, and in due course he was sent down to the base for transference to England.

After three months of this nursing work an accident happened, which changed Gordon's sphere of service. The men of the R.A.M.C. had not been quartered in the hospital itself; they lived in their own tents on the hill behind the hospital. These tents were provided with a system of shallow trenches for the draining away of rain water. It happened that as Gordon was wending his way home one evening he had the misfortune to put his foot on a loose duckboard, which tilted up and precipitated him into the trench. He managed to rise, thinking that he had escaped with a sprained arm. The X-rays were applied, however, next day, and twice again the following day, with the result that his elbow was found to be fractured. That

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meant that Gordon must carry his arm in a sling for six weeks to come, and that he must have it massaged twice a day. Thereafter, for a few weeks' light duty, he was sent to assist in the steward's store in the making up of diet rations for the hospital cookhouse and in the issuing of food extras for the patients. So well did Gordon acquit himself at this responsible work that he was kept at it until the end of the war.

In his new sphere of service Gordon had many opportunities of seeing what was going on around him during all that critical time. He was an eyewitness of the stream of battle casualties which flowed into the hospital in November, when the British boys made an attempt to take Cambrai from the Germans—an unsuccessful attempt, Gordon says, because the bridges collapsed while our new and untried tanks were seeking to cross the water.

Then about 31st December the incoming patients told of the great German counter attack. They told that our lines were broken; they told also that the Germans had forced their way through nearly to Gouzeaucourt, but that they seemed to be disorganised, and unprepared to take advantage of their own success. Other patients brought the news that the Scots Guards, who had been resting at "Tincourt," had been rushed up to the front, and had saved the situation.

During these days of tension and excitement Gordon and his comrades used to listen with awe to the thunder of the guns, which ceased not day nor night. German aeroplanes, too, began to be a source of anxiety. Our lad remembers one awful night, when the bombs fell very near to the hospital, and shook the whole building. The shell-shock patients especially became frantic. They jumped up from bed, and ran outside in a state of frenzy, seeking to hide themselves anywhere from the dreaded bombs. The ward orderlies were powerless to

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control the poor fellows, and Gordon Cameron, along with all other available help, was called out to search the neighbourhood for these patients, and to bring them back to hospital.

For some time after this it was tolerably quiet at Gailly Hospital, until the Germans opened their great offensive in March 1918. The casualties then began to arrive in overwhelming numbers. On some days as many as 1200 cases would pass through the doctors' hands, some of these cases to be retained for immediate operation and treatment, many of them to be sent farther back to other hospitals. Gordon Cameron does not now like to recall those days to memory. Till that time, he says, he had no conception of how much our human frame can bear—how fearful an injury it can be made to suffer before at length it ceases to suffer any more.

Gordon and his comrades were kept hard at work day and night, not taking time to undress for a week on end, preparing beef-tea and cocoa and sandwiches for the wounded men who were ceaselessly arriving at the reception room. Optimistic always these wounded men were, and cheerful to the most amazing degree—even the men who had suffered injuries unspeakable, indescribable! But out of all their various stories and reports it was difficult for Gordon to learn how the battle was actually going. The Germans were advancing, that was clear, and the day came when the British artillery began to operate from the railway line at the very side of the hospital. Sleep was not to be thought of—the hospital was shaken with the shocks of the firing, and the place was illumined with the flaming of the big guns. Then at last up rode some staff officers with the order to clear out, and to retire to Amiens. No easy task this for the R.A.M.C., considering that something like 1400 wounded men had come in during the last twenty-four hours, but there was no alternative.

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The wounded men, therefore, were sent down in a stream of motor ambulances to Villers Brettoneux, thence by train to Amiens — the Gailly Hospital buildings and all their equipment had to be left to the Germans! Only the foodstuffs could be saved, and these were sent direct to Amiens by motor lorries. Gordon was on this transport work, and he will never forget his journey through the confused mass of traffic which was struggling to make its way along the roads—French peasants with as many of their worldly possessions as they could wheel in a barrow or carry upon their backs, old women excitedly pulling along their cows, batteries of worn-out guns rumbling down the road, reinforcements of new artillery rushing up.

The food stores did succeed in reaching the hospital at Amiens that night, but they were no sooner there than the German aeroplanes commenced to bomb the town, seeking to destroy the railway station, which was close beside the hospital. Patients and staff sought shelter in the basement, and all that night they listened in terror to the fearful explosions of the dropping bombs and the crashing of the French anti-aircraft 75's. It was five o'clock in the morning until the noises abated, then at night again the same dreadful experience had to be endured. Next morning arrived the alarming order to vacate the town and retire to Namps Sauval.

Gordon tells us that on that day there came to the hospital a lady from a neighbouring convent with the request that some of the R.A.M.C. men might be allowed to remove a crucifix from the chapel and place it on a cart outside. Gordon was one of the six men sent to help in this unusual task. The crucifix was very heavy, and the men were fain to lay it down upon the ground for a moment before hoisting it on to the cart. "The nuns," he says, "thronged round the crucifix with such outbursts of piety and sentiment that we could hardly get it away from them." They were

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to remain in Amiens, these ladies, as they had remained in the town previously when the Germans were in possession, but they had decided to send away the crucifix to safer quarters.

At Namps Sauval there was no unloading of the R.A.M.C. lorries, for several other casualty clearing stations had already taken up positions there. Of wounded men in that vicinity there was no lack. Gordon felt sore at heart when he saw thousands of these men waiting attention—literally thousands!—lying in the open fields without covering on that cold March day.

The unit was next ordered to Fouilloy, about twenty kilos distant. The American doctor, who was in charge of the party, rolled off in his car to lead the way for the motor lorries. Gordon Cameron's waggon, however, with its three or four tons of foodstuffs and its four attendants, was unfortunate enough to lose its way at some cross-roads amid the throngs of traffic, and it pushed ahead with all speed to reach Fouilloy along a road which led not to that destination. In passing other vehicles it ran too far to the side of the road, it stuck deep and fast in the soft, sandy soil, and it refused to budge either backward or forward. So the four attendants jumped off the lorry, unloaded the whole of their stuff by the roadside, freed the wheels, reloaded the waggon, restarted the engine, and hurried on.

They now began to have doubts as to whether they were indeed driving along the road to Fouilloy. They frequently tried to make inquiry of people by the wayside, they pronounced the word Fouilloy with every possible variation of pronunciation, but they only succeeded in completely mystifying the people of whom they asked their anxious question.

It was night now, the wind was blowing a hurricane, the rain was falling in sheets, when again the lorry ran

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to the side of the road and plunged its wheels in sand and mud up to the very axle. Again the four stout hearts unloaded cases and tins by the side of the road, but this time the lorry itself refused to move out of the hole. The driver now rebelled; he would do no more, he said, without assistance. So a fire was made there in the night. The party sat in the empty waggon and cheered themselves with cocoa and bread and butter, after which they laid themselves down and slept till morning. At nine o'clock a Canadian convoy came along. The Canadians were good enough to pull the waggon out of the mud, but they knew not the road to Fouilloy. There was therefore no alternative but to push ahead to some town, inquire for the area commandant, and ask him to telephone to the 4th Army to learn where the 41st Stationary Hospital was situated. To end the story—Gordon's waggon had already raced thirty kilos past its destination, and it was six o'clock at night ere the party found their way back to Fouilloy!

"No sooner settled at Fouilloy than it was discovered," says Gordon, "that we were in a French sector, and so we had to move again to Pont Remy, eight kilos on this side of Abbeville. We put up twenty-four hospital marquees, and filled these with patients, only to find that we were now too far back from the line, as the Germans had begun to retreat. Once more, therefore, we packed up and moved to Dury."

Dury was the best equipped establishment that Gordon Cameron had yet seen in France. It was not really a hospital before the war, but a "Maison de Fous" or Lunatic Asylum, surrounded by its own spacious grounds. Now, in August 1918, Gordon's unit (135 R.A.M.C.'s) took it over for their war work, and here they were quartered for nearly six months. It was a pleasure to work in such a place, for the wards were

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exceedingly comfortable for the patients, and the stores were nicely and conveniently fitted up for the steward and his assistants. As the hospital was built on the hill overlooking Amiens, the view was a dreary and desolate one now that the town was deserted, but indoors there were concerts and whist drives to make life pleasant for patients and staff.

In November came the Armistice, after which Amiens was open for the French people to return to their dwellings and shops. In January 1919, therefore, the R.A.M.C. removed to Poulinville, fourteen kilos distant, on the other side of Amiens. A dismal place—Poulinville: a village of mud and duckboards, in a ruined, blasted country. As German prisoners were here employed for fatigue work, our lad used to admire their diligent, systematic ways of working. "Our officer," says Gordon, "would set them a task, say to lay a piece of flooring. The Germans would look at the job, make their plans, and finish the work straight through in a forenoon, without a hitch. When the officer returned he would marvel that the work was finished, as he had expected it might keep them busy for two or three days." One of these German prisoners who could speak English told Gordon that he blamed the Kaiser and Lloyd George for all the war—that he would put the two of them alone in a field, and let them clear up their differences between themselves!

At Poulinville Gordon Cameron and thirty others who had joined the army in 1916 or later were ordered to accompany the Army of Occupation into Germany. They were first sent to Woollersheim as reinforcements to the Field Ambulance. There might be 200 R.A.M.C. men in Woollersheim, where at that time, Gordon tells us, there were no fewer than *two* patients under their charge—"two of my own unit," he remembers, "who were sick!"

Gordon's next move was to Heimbach, where he

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was first quartered in private German billets. He marvelled to find how kind and attentive were the people with whom he lodged. Every morning they had his boots and buttons brightly polished for him; they seemed in every way to try to make him feel at home.

A few days later he was quartered along with his unit in a great hotel, an establishment most beautifully fitted up. Here he had a gentleman's life for about a month. The Colonel, after inspecting the men every morning at nine o'clock, tried to find employment for them, such as clearing the paths, picking up odd bits of branches and leaves, &c. This was, however, a mere pretence of work, for most of their time was spent in wandering about the hillside.

This pleasant stay in Heimbach came to an end when Gordon received his papers of discharge. Gladly he set his face to the homeland—to Duren first, to Cologne to see the Cathedral, to Dunkirk, to Dover, to Ripon for the giving up of his kit, then—he was once more a free man!

Gordon is with us now in the Cowgate, and he wishes to see and hear no more of war. He says that, although he would not like to undergo the same again, he would not on any account have missed his war experience, for it had brought him into contact with so many different types of men, and it had given him an interesting and educative glimpse of the great world outside.

JAMES S. DALL

(AGED 20),

GUARDSMAN (14602), 1ST BATT. SCOTS GUARDS.

JAMES DALL, bookbinder, commenced his apprenticeship with us in 1910, and he became a journeyman in the end of last year, the usual allowance of time having been made for the years which he spent in the army. In his boyhood he had received his education in Hill Street Public School and Stobswell Supplementary School. His two elder brothers were also connected with the printing trade—David, a lithographer, who died, alas, of wounds which he received on the Somme, and Tom, an apprentice compositor, who died in King's Cross Hospital after demobilisation, his death caused by the exposure he underwent in Flanders during the war.

On Monday, 1st November 1915, James Dall enlisted in the army. He would have liked to go sooner, for his brothers were both away in 1914, but he had to consider his duty to his parents at home. As the days grew ever darker for his country, as the cry for recruits became insistent, as the Derby Scheme began to take effect, then lads like James could not go out upon the public street without feeling, as he says, that everyone was looking at them and saying that big chaps like these ought to be in the army.

James's friend and shopmate, Ernest Gillanders, had already joined the Scots Guards, and when home on a furlough he had discussed the question with James.

"What about coming back with me?" said Ernest.

James now cast aside all indecision. He would enlist, and he would try if he could get into the same



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regiment as his friend. So one evening to the recruiting office at 29 Nethergate he went, alone. To this day he vividly remembers all that took place.

"What do you want to join?" questioned the man at the door. On being told, he said—"Stand there for a minute; the recruiting sergeant for the Scots Guards will be here directly."

The latter came and eyed the applicant. "I think you'll do," he said; "but wait till I measure." He measured 5 feet 8 inches—just the limit of height for admission.

The sergeant seemed to be anxious to secure the new recruit, for it is not every youth who has the stature and the physique demanded by the Guards.

"Run upstairs," he said, "and undress for the doctor; he'll be here at eight o'clock."

The doctor, however, did not come at eight, and ere he arrived there had gathered in that upstairs room about a dozen other shivering applicants.

"Have you any valuables you would like me to keep for you?" asked the old soldier who was lingering in attendance. The youths handed over their watches and their money to the old man's custody, and rewarded him afterwards for his trouble.

Towards nine o'clock the doctor came, and our young friend was duly passed. Downstairs then to the officer who was waiting to swear in the new recruits. There with one hand on the open Bible and the other raised aloft, James Dall took oath to serve his King and country and to give obedience to his superiors. James received 2s 6d towards his first day's wages and ration money—1s 1d a day was the guardsman's wages in those days, with 1s 9d for rations. Before he went out the clerk inquired—"When can you start?" James wished to give a fair warning to his employers before leaving—"Oh, in a week, at least," he replied. "Well, on Friday," said the clerk; and so it was.

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Good-bye now to parents and friends, and back to the recruiting office on Friday, 5th November. There he received his arrears of pay—19s 8d all told, including the 2s 6d already paid. “Stand still for a minute,” he was ordered. The minute lengthened to an hour, then with other twenty or thirty youths, he was marched down to the Caledonian Railway Station, where he was seen safely on board the London train.

Next morning James looks upon London for the first time. He wanders along the streets for a few hours before he takes the train for Caterham, his destination, which he reaches in the afternoon. On asking his way at the military policeman who is standing on the station platform, he is directed to go straight up the hill to the Lunatic Asylum, next door to which he will find the barracks. “Take care not to go in at the wrong door,” the policeman calls. In after days James finds that this phrase had become a standing joke among the Guards. If a man was stupid at his drill, the squad instructor called to him, “You’ve come in at the wrong door,” or “You’ve passed the door.”

“Caterham Barracks,” so the instructor tells our young friend, “are the finest barracks in the United Kingdom. Even Germany doesn’t have the like.” They consist of six huge blocks of brick buildings, so arranged as to enclose a great drill square. Our recruits, however, are not yet in the square. They stand somewhat timidly before the guardroom door, and they soon discover that they are no longer their own masters. Here men do not speak in the soft tones of civil life, but firm and sharp and swift. Like rifle shots come the orders and the questions—“Stand over there!” “Where’s your papers?” “What are you for—Grenadiers or Coldstreams, Scots, Irish, or Welsh?”

Now to our James—“Scots Guards? You stand here.”

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A guardsman is called, and to him the command is given—"Take these men to K Company Headquarters." He leads off the victims to the "bunk" or office, where their papers are examined. The order is shouted, "Dall, you go to Hut 6—over there"; and our man goes over to "Tin Town," a village of iron huts which has sprung up since the war began, and in which all new recruits are quartered. Hut 6 is empty, except for five men who arrived earlier in the day, and who are now standing talking. Trained soldier Skinner is in charge of the hut. The name seems to suit the man, he is so slim and wiry and sharp.

At bedmaking, which is the first bit of work to be done, we begin to realise that Hut 6 is a larger place than we thought. This one room accommodates thirty-six beds set out all round the walls, while in the centre there are three great white scrubbed tables on iron trestles, with six forms on iron legs. At each end of the room there stands a great coke stove. Our recruits are first detailed off for the position each man's bed is to occupy. Then Skinner points them to the heaps of furniture in the corner—a heap of bedboards (each board, say, seven and a half feet long by one foot broad), a heap of low wooden trestles to keep these bedboards nine inches off the floor, a heap of "biscuits" or mattresses (each, say, thirty inches square), a heap of heavy blankets, a heap of sheets, and a heap of bolsters stuffed with straw. Each man takes two trestles, three bedboards (which he places side by side upon the trestles), three "biscuits" (which he lays upon the boards), one bolster, three blankets (one to go beneath him double and two above him, also double), and two sheets to complete his set.

Tea is brought to our recruits the first night, but after this they will have to wait upon themselves. Skinner brings for each man a big bowl, which he fills out of a tea dixie (oval pail) with, say, two pints of

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tea. A plate he places for each, and upon it he lays a bit of margarine and a tablespoonful of marmalade. He takes a long loaf—two feet long it is—and cuts off the required number of slices, each slice an inch and a half in thickness. Tea is cooling meanwhile, but nobody dares to touch it. “Bear in mind,” says Skinner, “when I put out food, nobody is to touch it till I tell him. If any man begins, he’ll find himself in the report.” At last he shouted “Carry on,” and the recruits fell to the food. It was a rough meal, but the lads didn’t care now; they were already subdued in spirit. After tea they sauntered about the place—not out of the barracks, of course, for they were not to be allowed out for a fortnight. When they gathered in for the night, they got the order that nobody must go to bed till after nine o’clock; all must answer the roll-call at nine, otherwise “their names would be in the report.” “Remember you’re in the Guards now,” was constantly being repeated in their ears. At ten o’clock—“Lights out!”

Reveille was sounded by the bugle next morning at 5.30, but the men must be out of bed by that time. The sergeant-in-waiting saw to that, for he walked round and called the roll. “You new fellows,” he announced, “you’ll be for the stores to-day for your uniform at nine o’clock, after breakfast.” And “Don’t forget!” was what he added to every order.

This first morning our recruits stand at the door of their hut to see the breakfast roll-call parade filling the great square. Half an hour it took, after which, in a seeming confusion of shouting and roaring, the men broke away into their own squads. Here it is not the instructor alone who shouts, but also the men, and with all the strength of their lungs—“One, two!” “One, two, three!” “One!—One, two!” and the shout accompanies each motion of the drill, as hand and foot move up or down or right or left. Movements are

violent and sudden, feet stamp with force upon the ground, hands clash the rifle till they bleed. The men shout that they may work together, but each squad is working at a different time and at different drill from its neighbour, thus increasing the apparent confusion. Over all the country round is heard the thunder of the Guards' parade.

Swank parade is held twice a week, when these gentry of the army walk in a circle round their playing band. To the men who are posted outside and inside the circle they salute with right hand or with left, according to the correctest mode. They also learn how properly to hold their cane.

After breakfast roll-call parade comes breakfast itself, brought in this morning to our recruits, as their number is not yet up to strength for allocating duties. (Later on there will be four men detailed off each night to bring in the food next day from the cookhouse, to wash up the dishes, &c.—these men being called “swabs” in the Guards.) Breakfast this morning consists of tea and sausage, the sausage beginning to get cold before Skinner gives the word to “Go!” After breakfast he showed them how to make their beds—“No other way will do,” he shouted, “but this way, otherwise I will take your names.”

Now to the quartermaster's stores for the new uniform. This was an experience which our new recruit will never forget. The quartermaster's stores comprise a series of great rooms, each room stored with its own special class of goods, and each room staffed with its throng of hustling, shouting attendants. Here follows a list of the articles thrust into the arms of the recruits:—From room No. 1—2 tunics, 2 pairs trousers, 1 pair puttees, 1 hat. From room No. 2—3 shirts, 3 pairs socks, 3 pairs pants, 1 cardigan jersey, 2 towels, 1 stocking cap (this last a most useful article in days to come, for it can act as a night cap or a muffler just as

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desired). From another room—2 pairs boots (heavy and big and nailed), and 1 pair of soft canvas shoes. From another room—a kit bag, in which the recruit is glad to push the various knick-knacks that follow—a tin of blacking, a tin of Soldier's Friend polish, a button stick, a housewife case (containing a packet of buttons, needles, pins, wool, and thread), a holdall (containing knife, fork, spoon, comb, tooth brush, and tooth powder), and lastly, a pair of braces. The recruits are embarrassed with all this mountain of possessions. They let things fall here and there; they are scolded for their awkwardness and nervousness. Yet another room, and now they receive, and with some secret pride, the two silver thistles and the two sets of brass letters "S. G." to hook upon their shoulders; also the brass badge for their cap.

No sitting down to rest yet, for our lads are hurried upstairs. They are allowed five minutes to dress in the new garments; they are badgered and worried to hurry up; then with clothes hanging around them unbuttoned, with boots unlaced, with their old cast-off garments and the remainder of their new possessions in their arms, they descend the stair and stagger over the slippery, frozen square to their "home"—Hut No. 6. There they collect themselves somewhat, and put things to rights.

The remainder of that day is filled up with odd jobs—with learning to polish buttons, boots, &c. The old civilian clothes may now either be sold to the store-keeper for a trifle of two or three shillings, or if preferred they may be sent back, post free, to the old folks at home. Our James chose the latter course, and with two sheets of brown paper and string and labels (price 2d) he made up his two parcels. In the haste and excitement he must have packed them but poorly, for the brown paper gave way on the road, and the clothes were indebted only to the string for keeping them together until they reached his friends.

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Next day James's kit and all its contents must be taken to the company stores to be stamped; and there, while he waits, the "S.G. 14602" is impressed on everything—on bag and knife, and spoon and comb, and every article of clothing.

Hut No. 6 was filling up now. One night our friend was warned for parade the following morning, and in due course he found himself in a new squad on the great square under the eye of Sergeant Cannon. Here is how the drill works out:—Fall in at five minutes to six. The drill sergeants are walking up and down the square till the great clock chimes the hour; the drum gives a rat-a-tat to call everyone to stand at ease; the sergeants run to fall in line on their own account at right angles to the squads. The drum taps for them alone; they spring to attention. A roll of the drum, and the sergeants dress by the right; another solitary tap, and heads spring with a jerk to the front. The sergeant-major shouts—"Non-commissioned officers, stand at ease!" The officer of the parade draws them to attention, inspects, gives his orders for the drill of the morning, and dismisses them.

The same proceeding now takes place for the privates. Each N.C.O. calls his squad to attention, calls the roll, inspects, and stands them at ease. The officer draws parade to attention, then gives the order to "carry on." The squads break away to their own position on the square, and the roar of the great drill rises to the sky. For the novices it will be "right turn," "left turn," and "about turn" for days on end. There is always some awkward fellow who cannot turn upon his heel, and until he can do this to perfection he keeps the others back. One hour per day is spent in the gymnasium at stiff, painful work—at standing straight and firm while the trunk goes round till the head is looking backward, and if a recruit thinks he cannot do this his neck is twisted for him; at bending the

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body backward from the hips; at raising and lowering the body while hands and feet are on the ground, and so on. Painful though this experience was, our recruit soon began to feel as he had never felt before in all his life—so well and strong, so conscious of his power to walk, to run, almost to fly!

Plenty of food there was, heaped plates of it, yet there was little over, for the appetite of these young giants seemed insatiable, some of them even supplementing their meals at the dry canteen. Dinner (at 12.30) generally consisted of stew, potatoes, and vegetables, or hash, with custard, and bread and butter and jam. On Sundays peeled grapes or blanc-mange was added. Tea (at four) sometimes was accompanied with celery, lettuce, or cheese. Supper, consisting of soup or coffee with sausage or mash, was given only in winter.

Five months our lad spent at Caterham Barracks. A finished guardsman now, he was transferred to Wellington Barracks, London, the headquarters of the 3rd Reserve Battalion Scots Guards. James had a strenuous course of field training at Tadworth—trench-digging, bombing, bayonet fighting, fixing barbed wire, making night attacks, &c. He also underwent a course of signalling—heliograph, telephone, flag, disc, and lamp, and in everything he passed “first-class.”

The German air raids now commenced. One night, when the alarm was given to the Guards to scatter and run out into the fields, James saw in the distance the showers of our anti-aircraft shells as they burst like twinkling stars; then he noticed a sudden flare and the falling of a great star. Next morning he read in the newspapers the account of the tragic end of the great German zeppelin!

In February 1917 James Dall, along with ten other signallers and a detachment of the Guardsmen, was sent across to France. From that date until the

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ending of the war he knew no rest. He could trace out for us every step of the way, but the story is too long to relate in detail. Here are some of the outstanding points:—

Landing at Le Havre, the Guards marched to Harfleur, their base depot, where they were further instructed in gas mask practice and musketry. At Maurepas they joined other details of their regiment, and moved to Combles, where the battalion, utterly worn out, was just coming out of the front line for a month's rest. The reinforced battalion was now marched to Clery, and the month's "rest" for the war-worn heroes was fully occupied with the pleasant pastime of repairing roads, filling up shell holes, and building, in all haste, a railway from Clery to Peronne. They constructed this railway so satisfactorily that the General commanding the Division asked them to volunteer to build another line at Rocquigny—a line which they began but did not manage to finish, as the Germans brought their guns to bear upon it.

At this railway work James Dall had the misfortune to meet with a rather alarming accident. He tells how his whole company of sixty or seventy men were on one occasion engaged in overturning an old bit of the line to replace it with a new piece. They had lifted a stretch of twenty yards of old rails and sleepers, and were proceeding to throw it over, out of the way, when one rail broke, and the whole mass fell, pinning our lad beneath it. Luckily for him the ground was soft, otherwise he might have lost his life. Three men carried him back to camp, and there he lay "in bed" for a week. His bed, be it observed, consisted of a waterproof sheet and a blanket laid on the bare ground. Such were the Spartan customs of the Guards! The days of James's convalescence were occupied with day and night shifts on the same railway work. The times were critical, and the Canadian

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Engineers were manfully knocking in the pins as fast as the Guards could lay the rails and sleepers together.

Thereafter James had the most pleasant little time of all his army life. He accompanied the signallers on a three or four days' signalling scheme, and in a picturesque, rocky valley near Clery the lads carried on their signalling practice. Their spare time they spent in boating on the Somme, in fishing for perch, and bathing in the canal. James laughs yet as he tells you how they plugged up the holes in an old boat; how Skipper Carey, as they called him, went a-sailing in it; and how the boat subsided to the bottom of the river, leaving the skipper to flounder ashore as best he could.

In April the Guards Division received orders to proceed to Flanders. A ten days' march brought them to Blouet Farm, near Elverdinghe, where they took their places in the battle front. "Railway Street" was the name of the trench to which James Dall and the signallers were posted. It was just in front of Pilkelm Ridge, by the side of the Yser Canal. Our lad was now fairly amid the bursting shells, and in their midst he was to live a charmed life until the war was over!

But how did James and his fellow-signallers manage to reach their position in "Railway Street," when the German guns were sweeping the country round? By night they marched—six miles on the level ground, then three heavy miles by tortuous muddy trenches. Six men and a sergeant made up their party. What did they carry amongst them, think you, besides each man's own heavy pack, and his rifle, and 250 rounds of ammunition? Listen! They carried four buzzers (Fuller phones), two D3 army telephones, an army "four-plus-three" telephone exchange, a heavy reel of half a mile of double wire with sundry smaller reels, a bundle of flags, a set of lamps, two sets of signalling flappers, and an aeroplane signalling kit.

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"How could you fellows carry such a load?" we asked. James made answer, "It's wonderful what you can do when you've got to do it." He further explained to us that the flappers were a kind of signalling apparatus which could be fixed on the end of a bayonet and worked by a string; also, that the aeroplane kit was used for signalling up to aeroplanes, and that it consisted of a kind of sheet fixed in a frame and covered by a series of venetian blind slats, which were laboriously opened and shut by means of elastic straps.

They stumbled along in the mud and the darkness, these stalwarts, and they missed the guide who was to have led them forward. They reached the shelter of "Railway Street," however, in time to escape the German barrage of shell fire which used to burst out at the hours of changing relief. In "Railway Street" trench our signallers spent the next six days. They were on their iron rations of bully beef and biscuits; but as they had a wooden floor beneath their feet, they were fairly comfortable. Duty was six hours on and six hours off, night and day, at the telephone which was in connection with the various companies on the line and with the Brigade Headquarters.

Back now to Herzele for a few days' rest. In this district our lad met his brother Tom (A.S.C.) for the last time. There was little respite in Herzele, for the time was passed in fatigue duty up the line, and in carrying forward picks and shovels for the digging of a "bury" for the telephone cables. As this latter work had all to be done by night, every available man was employed at it.

Another spell in the trenches at Pilkelm, where the atmosphere was electric with nervous tension! Both sides were in hourly expectation of the battle; drum fire roared incessantly day and night; barrages of shot and shell blazed forth every half-hour from friend and



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foe, as if anticipating the advance. The men at the front, James tells us, dared not close their eyes in those awful days, in those muddy trenches; or, if they slept at all, it could only be by fits and sudden, fearful starts.

A week in "the line," and again James and his comrades were withdrawn to Herzele—this time for a "practice attack." This was an elaborate affair intended to lead up to the capture of Pilkelm Ridge. Suitable ground resembling the Ridge was selected, a dummy canal was excavated to represent the Yser Canal, barbed wire entanglements were fixed up, blockhouses and "pill boxes" were constructed with wood and canvas—all in replica of the German defences in front. Then the practice attack was tried; the whole brigade was at the work, every man with his full equipment on his back, just as he would be on the fateful day. Successive waves of men made their forward rush, objectives were carried, communications were established. For ten days, forenoon and afternoon, this great attack was practised, until all the plans were perfected and every soldier knew exactly what he was expected to do. Lastly, the officers' watches were set in unison, by telephone, and in the early morning of the 31st July the great advance was made!

At "zero" hour (the actual moment being known only to those high in command—say 4.45 A.M., just as the day was breaking) the whole of our artillery, thousands of mighty guns, open fire with thunderous crash, and the air is filled with deafening sound and dazzling flame. The rush is made! The front line (the "Blue Line") of the Germans, with a goodly number of prisoners, is captured! Their support line also has been seized! Our objectives are Grudesdale Farm (the enemy's headquarters on Pilkelm Ridge) and the village of Langemarck. Our men have to struggle over three miles of broken country knee-deep

in mud, churned up by shot and shell. It is an awful experience. "Twenty or thirty yards," James says, "of this frantic rush, uphill, with your full kit of 90 lbs. on your back and your load of telephone instruments, takes the breath from the stoutest man!" The river Steinbeck, too, has to be crossed on shaky duckboards precariously buoyed up with empty petrol tins, and in the crossing many a gallant lad is thrown into the muddy water.

Grudesdale Farm is taken! strong as it is in its concrete defences. James Dall can see that the German Staff has been living here in all comfort. For our signallers there is not a moment's pause; their wires must instantly be laid to the companies on right and left, back also to the Brigade Headquarters. They lay the lines, but in five minutes these are shattered by the ceaseless shelling; the wires must be repaired without delay—so James Dall and his comrades go out upon that shell-torn waste and coolly mend their wires, thinking of their own lives not at all!

James tells us that the casualties were brought into Grudesdale Farm for first treatment, after which they were sent further back. The ambulance men had a heavy task that dreadful day. They worked like heroes, but the ground was so broken and so deep in mud that they frequently found themselves almost beaten to convey a wounded man out of the danger zone. When the German prisoners began to come in they, of course, gave willing help to the stretcher men, as they knew the work would lead themselves out of danger. They did not look so happy, however, when they were ordered back into the fiery furnace to carry more of the stricken men into safety.

Our guardsmen were relieved that night, for they had suffered much in the advance. They drew back to Elverdinghe, on the Yser Canal, where they scraped some of the mud from their puttees, set up their little

bivouacs, and crept into the humble shelters to seek an hour's repose. Alas, even here they were pursued by the German Fokker aeroplanes, which took their toll of the exhausted men.

After five days' "rest" in this exposed position, with fatigue duty every night for the benefit of the men in the line, these heroes are again at the front for an attack on the enemy. The proud German "Cockchafer" regiment is before them now, so there must be no flinching. Air raids are being made by the enemy in the daytime, and air raids in the darkness of the night. "You think you are finished with them," says James, "and on again come the aeroplanes, squadron after squadron." Shells burst without cessation, and every missile does its deadly work. The enemy's guns require not to be aimed at any target, for we have the country behind us actually covered with our reserves in readiness for our coming great attack.

On the 9th August, in the grey dawn, our men again went over the parapet, floundered through the water and mud of the Brauenbeck, and finally crossed the Pilkelm Ridge. Hastily James and his comrades strove to dig for themselves some shelter in the muddy earth. They laid their lines and listened at their telephones; they passed the hours of night amid a rain of bursting shells.

This advance, James tells us, was proving too expensive in human life, and a halt was called. For three weeks he and his fellows did light duty out of the range of the guns. They were then sent off on a fortnight's march to Cambrai, where a battle was anticipated. The battle of Cambrai had commenced before the Guards arrived upon the scene, therefore they marched the last four days of their journey both day and night, with short intervals for sleep and for repasts of iron rations. On the Bapaume-Cambrai road our lads were overtaken by fresh men for the front—in

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buses, in hot haste! James learned that the British troops had gone too far in their attack, and now the dreaded Prussian Guards were threatening to attack in their turn. Our Guards were just in time to save the situation. The 1st Brigade, the 3rd Brigade, the 2nd Brigade—three mornings in succession these heroic men advanced upon the enemy. It was at this time, James tells us, that Sergeant M'Aulay, D.C.M., of the Glasgow Police, won his Victoria Cross. For what did he win it, think you? He bravely carried out of the fray the Master of Kinnaird, who had been fatally wounded; then he took command of his company in its disorganised and shattered condition, rallied the men, and led them back to capture the village of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, close by Bourlon Wood!

Our Guards lost many men in the battle of Cambrai, and they were withdrawn to make way for the Staffords. James remembers that when the regiments met as they were changing places, the officer of the Staffords called out—"What like is it up there, sergeant?" "It's all right if you let them alone," was the reply. A very little Stafford chap shouted over, "All right, Jock, we'll be ready for them when they come."

The Staffords had a harder task before them than the wee man thought, for next day the Germans broke through the line, and disaster was imminent. By this time our Guards were at Ribecourt for a promised five days' rest. They were in the very act of getting their rations and clean shirts when suddenly the order was given, "Move at once!" Back they went in all haste, to find on their way that the country roads were already completely blocked with retreating limbers and waggons and fleeing men. And who, think you, were holding up the Prussian Guards at this awful moment? Only the Durham Labour Battalion and the Coldstream Guards Pioneer Battalion!

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Across country rushed our Guards in grim haste, the Irish Guards leading in the rush. As they ran they drove back before them as many of the retreating troops as they could gather. By good fortune the Germans had not been expecting their own success. They were disorganised in their victory. They saw the Irish Guards rushing upon them, and—they gave way.

This was at Gouzeaucourt, where the position was now safe. There was little artillery support here, however; only a gun or two to try to put up a barrage of safety. It is interesting to us to note that amongst these guns there was one worked by the Broughty Ferry Garrison Artillery.

Fairly quiet now for a few days was the life of the Guards at Gouzeaucourt, our signallers dwelling in a corrugated iron shack set in a sunken road. Thereafter the battalion had a well-earned rest of three weeks behind the town of Arras. Here they were able to enjoy their Christmas dinner in peace and safety. On New Year's Day they were marched to Arras, and on the next day they were in the front line at Monchy-le-Preux, again amid the fire of trench mortars and machine guns and heavy artillery. Four days in the line, four days in reserve, four days out of the line, eight days in reserve, eight days in the front—so goes the life of these devoted men.

A well-earned leave of a fortnight to see his friends at home and James Dall is again in the trenches at Monchy-le-Preux. He is sent for a month's signalling course to St. Catherine's, a suburb of Arras, but at a fortnight's end comes the sudden order, "Rejoin battalion at once!" The Germans have broken the British line between Arras and the Somme, and the Guards are posted at the flanks to hold the breach from breaking wider. It is fearful work—by day! by night!! There are seven paces of a gap between each

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hero. Will they be strong enough to hold their frail line? Or will they yield before the German rush?

This is enough for the details of battle. It is enough to indicate how stern and strenuous was the life, how brave and strong were the men of our Guards. Their day of triumph came at last, when, step by step and day by day, they drove the retreating enemy before them. Moyenville, Boiry St. Martin, Hamelincourt, St. Leger, Canal du Nord, Lagnicourt, Flesquieres, Bourlon Wood, Marcoing, Cambrai, St. Hilaire, St. Vaast, St. Python and the river Selle, Villers-St.-Pol, Le Quesnoy--the names are familiar to us all. Each was the scene of a Homeric, deadly struggle, and James Dall can tell you of them all, and of as many more! Maubeuge was occupied on 9th November 1918, and on the 10th James wrote down from his buzzer and carried to his commanding officer the message-- "*Hostilities will cease to-morrow at 11 a.m.*"! Then came the Guards' parade, and the C.O.'s speech to the men, congratulating and exhorting them. "Don't think," he said, "that because the war is finished you are to become slack and careless. You are to work harder than ever. You are to be cleaner and smarter and more soldierlike in all your acts!"

And now Jim Dall, after his two years of strenuous work and exposure and excitement, finds one night that he cannot sleep. In the morning he rises with a splitting headache, and he reports "sick." He is taken to hospital at Le Treport suffering from influenza; he improves a little; he relapses twice; then he recovers.

He was now sent to Le Havre, where he witnessed some of the disorders which followed the ending of the war. Then he was ordered to Cologne, where he spent six delightful weeks before being sent home for demobilisation.

He returned to London with his comrades of the Guards, and he says he will never forget the great

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reception which awaited them—the massed bands at the station—the nobility and gentry and politicians—the triumphal march through the crowded streets to the strains of “See, the conquering hero comes!”—the King and Queen waving a welcome from the balcony of Buckingham Palace!

He took his part also in the Victory march of the Guards on 22nd March 1919, when the Prince of Wales, as officer in command, led the whole division from the gates of Buckingham Palace on a four hours’ march of triumph through the cheering, grateful populace of London, through the long avenue of decorations and waving flags and bands of gladsome music!

On 23rd March James Dall left Wellington Barracks, he hopes, for ever. There was no one waiting him here at the Tay Bridge Station, for, as he wished to avoid any display of feeling, he sent no word to his friends as to the hour of his arrival. When at last he reached the shelter of his own home, his little child of twenty months did not take kindly to the tall, weather-beaten guardsman in his khaki uniform. She drew back and whimpered—but she knows her daddy now, and she is proud of him!

His country, too, may well be proud of him, for in its defence there are few who have endured more hardships and braved more dangers than our modest hero, James Dall.

ROBERT G. DOIG

(AGED 32),

PRIVATE (51805), 10TH HIGHLAND LIGHT INFANTRY.

ROBERT DOIG, bookbinder, served his apprenticeship with us in the years 1904-1911, and he is now proficient in the higher branches of his craft—in titling, gilding, and finishing.

When the Great War burst upon us, and the boys trooped to the colours, Robert held back from joining in the popular movement. The adventurous life of a soldier had no attractions for his quiet, contented spirit. Besides, he was short-sighted and not of robust build; the army, he imagined, would not accept his services. In course of time, however, when the Derby Scheme was being promoted, Robert had to choose whether he would make voluntary offer to serve his country, or whether he would wait until his country might command his help. Having gazed at the poster on the walls—"Will you march too? or Will you wait till March 2?" he resolved to enlist. He appeared at the Albert Hall. He was examined by the doctor, and his application for service was endorsed "Not Accepted."

Then when the Military Conscription Act was coming into force, Robert received notice that, if he still wished to enter the army as a volunteer, he must again present himself for examination. This time he was classified B3. It was a low category, so Robert felt himself fairly secure from being summoned for active service. In a few months, however, he was called up for re-examination. He was passed—"Category B1, Garrison Duty Abroad," and he was booked for the 10th Seaforth Highlanders.

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On 28th August 1917 Robert was sent off, with four other youths, to Dunfermline, where at that time various training reserve battalions were in course of formation. Having arrived in Dunfermline, our lads made their first inquiry regarding barracks at the military policeman who was standing on the platform. He told them where they must report themselves; he informed them also that if they wished to get anything to eat before entering upon army life, they ought to go to the Y.W.C.A. Canteen. So these devoted five, somewhat timid, all of them, at the thought of the untried life before them, and shrinking even yet from making their entry into barracks, sallied forth upon the public street to breathe their last breath of freedom. They found their way to the Y.W.C.A. Canteen, where they felt themselves at home as soon as they entered the room, for they were met with a kind and frank reception, and they were conscious of the home-like atmosphere of the books and periodicals and writing materials around them. As newly-arrived recruits they were not subject to the restrictions upon food which vexed other customers, so they had tea and something to it, and they felt wondrously refreshed.

In the course of the afternoon Robert Doig and another lad who was destined for the Seaforth Highlanders presented themselves at St. Ann's School, at that time the headquarters of C Company. The sergeant-major happened to be out at the moment, but a kindly corporal took charge of the lads, and welcomed them with a cup of tea in the messroom. He took them upstairs to the sleeping-room and showed them a vacant corner which they might call their own. He led them to the store for their beds and bedding—three bed planks, two trestles, and three blankets; no palliasses, as all these were already in use—and he showed them how to make their beds.



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He opened out his kit to show them all its contents, and he gave them much useful information and advice. They would find the life quite agreeable, he said, if they did what they were told, for "the crowd was a very respectable lot."

Even yet that wonderful first day was not quite finished, for during the long summer evening our boys had time to walk through Pittencrieff Glen. They enjoyed seeing the crowds of people strolling about so pleasantly, they listened to the music of a fine band; then—they turned to go home.

On entering the barracks they found the sergeant-major in his bunk, and after furnishing him with all requisite particulars, they retired to rest. The other inmates of the sleeping-room came trooping in, and as the clock struck nine a sergeant appeared. "Stand by your beds," he shouted, and the lads stood to attention. Then the sergeant, and a corporal with list in hand, walked round the beds and checked off every name. "Lights out" at 9.30.

Reveille sounded at 6 A.M., and our boys rose full of wondering anticipation. Bed-making was a simple operation for them that first morning, as their bedding and belongings were but scanty. In after days, Robert tells us, the morning bed-making was an important proceeding, and had to be done precisely according to rule. The three bed planks were first of all set upright against the wall. In front of the planks were placed the two trestles some distance apart. On the trestles were piled first the palliasse, neatly folded in three, then the three blankets (also folded according to rule), then the extra tunic, then the kilt; lastly, the towel was spread over the whole. Now again in front of the pile there had to be placed on the floor the tea bowl and the plate, and beside these the extra pair of boots, the right boot at the right side of the plate, and the left boot at the left side of the bowl—So! The

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regulations may seem to be unnecessarily minute, but if the course of life in St. Ann's Schoolroom had not been conducted according to rule and method everything would soon have gone to disorder and discomfort.

First parade was at 7 A.M., but our two recruits were as yet exempted from attendance. Breakfast, at eight, consisted of porridge cooked with sugar instead of salt (no milk); tea and bacon followed—enough of everything certainly, but no excess. In good weather the meals were all served in the playground, and this in itself lent an extra relish to the food.

Our lads, having as yet no uniform, were obliged to spend the day indoors. In the evening, however, they were allowed to go out for recreation to the Y.W.C.A. canteen, where there was always some kind of entertainment.

The second day of army life brought work to our recruits, for they had now to take their place at morning parade. While the main body of the men marched off to a field for drill, the new recruits (twenty-four in number) were trained by a corporal in the school playground. Their first exercise was the "slow march," not the easiest movement to learn by any means, rather one of the most difficult to perform correctly. Robert describes that in so marching the foot must be raised in a certain way. The toe must shoot forward, and must reach the ground before the heel. The hands must be held stiffly by the side, with the middle finger resting on the side seam of the trousers, and the head and chest must be carried with the upright bearing of a soldier. Many a time has Robert been a spectator of other men performing this "slow march"; very seldom has he seen it done neatly and correctly.

All that morning the recruits were drilled at this "slow march"; all forenoon was occupied with the same. The lads were then divided into separate squads

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—those who showed proficiency, and those who still lagged awkwardly behind. Other movements of infantry drill now began to be introduced.

On the third day our recruits were inoculated. This exempted them from duty for forty-eight hours. Thereafter a corporal led them to the stores for their uniform and equipment, having previously given them the hint to bring a blanket for the carrying of their new property.

“In the stores,” says Robert, “the tailor and his men took your measure with a glance of the eye, and threw at you a tunic, then another tunic, an overcoat, a cardigan jacket, a pair of trousers, and a kilt.” Robert was also provided with his kit bag and the many other items to be contained therein. Last, but not least, he received his cap with its precious badge of the deer’s head and the motto “Guidich’n Rich,” reminiscent of the day when the Seaforth Chieftain saved the life of his Sovereign, and was honoured with the crest in recompense. Robert then gathered up his blanket by the four corners, threw it over his shoulders, retired to his sleeping quarters, dressed himself in his new uniform, and took his parcel of civilian clothing to the railway station for free dispatch to his friends at home.

How did Robert Doig and his comrades feel in their new kilts? “Oh, well,” he says, “we felt a little strange at first, but the sensations were all within ourselves. The people on the street didn’t know it was the first time some of us had worn a kilt. Some of the boys buckled the belt too tightly, and that made them feel uncomfortable. When you get used to the kilt you can wear the belt quite slack.”

For nearly two months Robert Doig was quartered in Dunfermline. Mornings he spent in regimental drill and marching, forenoons in rifle drill and physical

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exercises, afternoons in route marching (with rifle, belt, and pouches, but at no time with full pack); evenings from 4.30 were free from duty. On Wednesday the boys were taken to the Carnegie Baths for bathing. On Sunday forenoon they were marched to church—the Roman Catholics to their chapel, and the Presbyterians to the Cathedral; the afternoon then was free for a long walk.

In the beginning of October the regiment, about 1000 strong, with all its stores and waggons, was removed to Cornton Camp, near Bridge of Allan. The lads were comfortably quartered in wooden huts; the officers were good and considerate, and life flowed smoothly as at Dunfermline.

Harvesting operations were at that time in full swing all over the land. Farm labourers were scarce, and a call arose for soldiers to give their help. Robert Doig and 200 of his comrades were sent to Stirling Castle, where they were classified and allotted to the farms according to their ability to work a harvesting machine, to hold a plough, to drive a cart, or manage cattle. Robert, poor fellow! could do none of these things, but eventually he was sent as a harvest helper to a farm near Blackford.

At this farm Robert Doig had the time of his life, for a short and happy fortnight. The household consisted of the old lady, her son the farmer, her two daughters (one of them married, with two little children), and a gentleman lodger. The hired helps comprised a man, a boy, two women, and now our own good lad; the animals—four horses for farm work, a pony for the trap, six milch cows, sundry straggling poultry, and a collie—"Bob" by name. This name gave rise to some amusing mistakes, for when the farmer wished our boy to help him with some task he shouted "Bob!" and the collie would bound to his side. When the farmer required the

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help of the dog to take in the cattle he again shouted "Bob!" and Robert Doig would hurry off to his master to ask what was his desire.

Robert received much kindness from these good people of the farm. They did all that lay in their power to make him feel at home, and they treated him more as one of themselves than as a hired man. At their invitation Robert had his meals in the cheery atmosphere of the family circle; but, as the farmhouse was not a large one, lodgings were found for him with two maiden ladies in a little cottage not far from the farm. These ladies also were as kind as kind could be, and they used to look out for his coming in the evenings, so that they might have a long talk with him.

What work did Robert do at the farm—a lad whose upbringing had omitted any training in the primal labours of human life? Well, he acknowledges that he knew absolutely nothing about farming when he came to Blackford, but he is clear of head and deft of hand, and by the end of a fortnight he reckoned himself as a good all-round farm help. Rising at five o'clock in the morning, he went to the pasture for the cows, and drove them home across the burn to the morning milking. Then the work of the day began in earnest. He cleaned down the horses in the stable, he helped the farmer to get his reaper and binder put in motion, he set up the stooks to catch the breeze, he forked up the sheaves upon the carts, he stood upon the carts to build, he led the loaded wains to the cornyard, and again he forked or built as might be required. If it chanced that the day was wet, he made straw ropes in the barn for the binding of the stacks, and he polished the buckles and the harness till they shone again.

The work was hard and constant; the food was wholesome and plentiful; the people around him were

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good and cheerful; his rest was sweet and deep when the work of the day was done. In Robert Doig's memory there now remains nothing but the most pleasant recollections of his work upon the farm near Blackford.

Before the harvest was ended Robert was recalled to the army, and he was sent back to Cornton Camp. Volunteers were asked for a cycle battalion, and as most of his comrades had offered themselves, Robert also gave his name, only to find that at the medical examination he alone was taken, and the others were left behind. In all 150 men were gathered from the four companies of the regiment. On 23rd October these men were sent to Dunbar to join the 2/1st Ayrshire Yeomanry, who were then being transformed into a cycle battalion. The camp was at Westbarns, on the Links, the lads being quartered in a huge mill—a building so large that on one floor alone space was found for 300 sleepers.

At Westbarns Robert had the good fortune to be sent to assist the rangekeeper, and now he found the work which suited both heart and hand. It so happened that at that time preparations were being made for a grand field day and sham battle, and also for an exhibition of trench systems. Dummy figures, life size, were being constructed of wood, and were fixed up on the links in such a way that by the pulling of cords from a hidden dugout they could be made to jump up or lie down at will. Heads of men, too, were cut out of wood, and were pasted over with representations of typical Germans. These were stuck in the ground at the summit of a ridge, so as to surprise any attacking party. As our boy is clever in the use of tools, in the handling of a saw or the wielding of a pastebrush, he proved himself to be a treasure to the authorities at Westbarns.

The trench systems had been in preparation for a

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long time—twelve months, Robert says. They were not dug below ground level, according to practice in war, but were built up from the ground with solid, heavy sods and turf, strengthened where needful with wood. Of the most approved design, these trenches were built in three zig-zag lines, showing communications, saps, island strong points, and dugouts. Some of the officers of the higher command came to Westbarns to see these model trenches, and Robert is proud to tell us that there were critics who declared the trenches to be “the best in Scotland!”

At three o'clock one dark, rainy morning an alarm was sounded, and the men turned out in all haste. They were served out with emergency rations, they strapped their kits and rifles on their bicycles, and there they stood in the wet and the darkness for three long hours, speculating as to whether the Germans had at last made a landing on the coast, or whether the Irish had risen in rebellion—then they were ordered to unpack and return to quarters!

Robert Doig was not destined for war work on the cycle. When the battalion was next inspected by the doctor, our lad, with a good many more, was rejected. He was thereupon sent to join the 1st Reserve Garrison Battalion Highland Light Infantry at Maryhill Barracks, Glasgow. Here he found the work harder and the discipline more strict than it had been at Dunfermline.

Foot drill, rifle drill, physical drill, bayonet fighting, bombing practice, gas mask training, musketry firing at the miniature range, musketry firing at the big range—all this went on without respite till our recruit became hard and firm and strong.

“Did you have much food to make you strong?” we asked him.

“No,” he replied. “We got enough, certainly; but not too much. I always felt hungry. I think it was

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the open-air life, the regular hours, the vigorous exercise that made all of us so fit."

After six weeks of this training Robert passed "off the square," and took his place among the fully-trained men who were waiting their summons for overseas service. These trained men were exempted from the daily drilling practices, and their duties were limited to the nightly guards, some slight fatigues, and last, but not least, the acting as military escorts to the funeral cortege of departed soldiers. Alas! there were many of these funerals to attend—two or three every week—for wounded soldiers were being brought over from France, and of these it was not every man who was fortunate enough to recover. So, for the next eighteen months, duty called Robert Doig to many a sad function. He tells us that no matter how experienced and how fully trained he and his comrades might be, they were always required to make a complete rehearsal of their movements before a funeral took place.

"Will you tell us," we asked him, "what was the routine of your military funerals, if the subject is not too sad for us to touch?"

Robert was good enough to give us the details, and here they are in brief:—To begin with, twelve men as a firing party and six men as bearers are marched to the house or hospital from which the funeral is to set out. A gun carriage, drawn by six horses, has meanwhile been drawn up at the side of the road. The firing party present arms as the bearers carry the coffin, draped with the Union Jack, to the gun carriage; then they reverse arms, and move off at the "slow march," the gun carriage following, and last of all the mourners. In front of all march the pipers, playing the "Dead March." The bugler follows in the rear of the firing party; the bearers walk on each side of the gun carriage. Slow and solemn is the

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march for one hundred yards, then the men break step, carrying their rifles at the trail. At the gateway of the cemetery the firing party line up at each side, and reverse arms while the cortege passes through. The coffin is lowered into the grave. The firing party line up on one side, and fire into the air three volleys of blank cartridge; then they reverse arms as the bugler sounds the "Last post." Lastly the firing party fix bayonets, present arms once more, and march off, usually unfixing bayonets at the gate.

Robert Doig found these duties to be very sad and painful. He says that at such a funeral he always felt as if he were one of the mourners most closely connected with the pathetic ceremony.

In June 1918, in a draft of over 100 men, Robert left Maryhill Barracks for overseas. The draft was delayed at Aldershot waiting for further reinforcements, and it was not until 4th July that the newly formed battalion sailed for France *via* Folkestone and Boulogne. The crossing of the Channel was an exciting experience. All the time of the passage the men stood, equipped with lifebelts, waiting for whatever eventuality might befall them. Two destroyers were in attendance on the crowded transport, and an airship kept a sharp look-out from the sky overhead.

At Boulogne the regiment was quartered for a day or two in St. Martin's Receiving Camp on the top of the hill, then with full packs the lads set out on the march through Sanghan, Tournayhem, Bonninques, to Nortleuenghem. The daily marches were long and fatiguing, and by nightfall the lads were fain to lie down to rest in either barn or stable. At Nortleuenghem Robert Doig and a dozen others were chosen as signallers, and on 15th July they were sent off to the signalling school at Eperlecques, where there were in training some hundreds of pupils from the various regiments. Robert enjoyed his course of

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signalling practice. The work was light and interesting, and he felt that now he was learning something really useful.

He was trained in the Morse code, the dot and dash system (on dummy keys), the buzzer, the flag, the Lucas lamp. The heliograph was explained to him, and he had some practice with the shutter. This last instrument, he explained to us, consists of a board, about a foot square, fitted with slats which show their colour, white or red, according as they are turned by the pulling of a string. The usual speed of working the shutter was about five letters to the minute.

Robert was attached to the signalling school for about three months. During that time the school was required to follow the division from place to place—to Ovest Mont (where some days previously the school had been wrecked by a bomb and some of the signallers killed), to Nordausques, to Nortkirk, then on 23rd August to Proven. Here for the first time our boy was within hearing of the artillery and in sight of the flames of the guns, and in danger from the dropping bombs.

The signallers were now summoned to rejoin their regiments, as the call for men was urgent. Robert Doig was sent to the famous Ypres sector, near the town of Poperinghe. At that point for the moment there seemed to be a kind of lull.

For a day or two the men were kept standing by while a push was made at the other end of the line. Robert and his comrades were then moved to Dickebusch to take over the trenches from an English regiment. He vividly remembers the night when his regiment was taken up to the front. He remembers the big transport waggons with their canvas roofs, and he can still hear the rumbling of these waggons through the ruined villages in the darkness of the night.

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"Then," he says, "at a country road we came down out of the waggons, and we started to march forward to the line. The guns were throwing shells about, but somehow or other I didn't feel as if these would strike me. We marched in platoons of sixty men, spread out in fours abreast, with a space between each little group of men. I distinctly remember the road along which we marched, the trees we passed, the rough, broken ground we had to cross. We changed to single file when we reached the trenches, and we stumbled along upon unsteady duckboards, and tramped ankle deep in mud where there were no duckboards, until we reached our post, and relieved the men who were waiting for us."

Robert Doig now considered himself lucky in being a signaller, for he was detailed with five comrades to company headquarters, which consisted of three bomb-proof shelters of corrugated iron protected by sandbags. The six signallers were privileged to occupy one of these apartments, and it is interesting to know that the room was so small that the lads must either sit or lie. The roof was not so lofty as to permit of any one rising to his feet. The telephone instruments were fitted up in a little pantry adjoining the living room.

Now this trench in which our boy was quartered had been captured from the enemy only a day or two before, and it was overlooked by the Germans' new line of trenches. It was therefore by no means a place of safety, and during the daytime our signallers dared not show their faces out of their burrow.

Their responsible duties, of course, were to keep the wires in repair and to attend to the telephone which regulated and co-ordinated the work and movements of the various regiments along the line. At the telephone the lads worked two hours on and four hours off, without intermission, day and night. The telephone wires

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were continually being broken by the shelling, and these broken wires had instantly to be repaired at whatever danger to life. This duty was generally entrusted to our lad, who was the very man to do the work carefully and efficiently.

Robert and a comrade used also to be sent every night at dusk to the regimental headquarters to bring up to the front line two messenger dogs and a basket of carrier pigeons. "We had to pass over about half a mile of flat open country," he says, "and the wonder is that we escaped with our lives. The Germans perhaps did not think it worth while wasting shells on two men." These dogs and pigeons were kept in the line under the care of a corporal. They were given no food, so that they might go home quickly if it was found necessary to send them off with some urgent message. If there happened to be no message for them they were all set free the next afternoon, so that they might find their way home before dark.

After a spell at Dickebusch Robert had a few days in a rest camp, but he did not enjoy this respite from work. The weather was wet; the hut in which he was quartered was crowded with a hundred men instead of fifty; the enemy aeroplanes were watching from the sky overhead; so Robert was not sorry when on 12th October he was sent to Messines.

Here a great attack was in prospect, and our lads were ordered to stand by in the reserve line as supports in case of the battle going against the men in front. It was a pitch black night when Robert took up his position in the rain and the abounding mud. "There were eight men of us," he says, "signallers and others, crowded into the only hole we could find, a piece of half-dug trench with a fragment of corrugated iron on the top. We tried to tuck a waterproof sheet around us, but what was the use?

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We were wet to the skin. 'There was no room to stand upright. We had to creep into a hole which would have held three; and there were eight of us, with rifles, packs, and signalling instruments. I had the Fuller phone, a big cumbrous thing, strapped on my back, besides the pack and rifle. We were wedged in the hole so tightly, with knees drawn up to the chin, that there could be no thought of sleep among us."

The blessed light of day arose at last, and these eight martyrs could at least look around them once more. They were now informed that the great attack was timed to come off next morning at four o'clock, so there was still before them a long grim day and night of stern endurance. Robert crawled about, and was lucky enough to find some wood and some boxes, which he brought back to the hole. These he disposed so as to keep himself and his comrades off the cold, wet ground. The poor lads, to keep their blood in circulation, had room only to clap their clammy hands and stamp their feet; and when in the night time the ration of rum was handed round, our Robert Doig—a life-long abstainer—felt tempted, as he had never felt tempted before, to drink the fiery draught.

At 3 A.M. the boys are ordered to stand in readiness for the crisis of the battle. They are trembling with suppressed excitement. They can see their front line in the distance; or, rather, they can see where the front line is situated. They see also the hill on the other side across the valley. Then they see our barrage throw its sudden hail of shells upon the enemy's line. They see the mountains of earth and stones flung high into the air. Liquid fire, too—in cataracts—they see it drenching the tortured earth, while a pall of fiery smoke floats up into the sky. For an hour they gaze upon the awful scene, then Robert and his fellows of the support line are informed that

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the advance has been successful, and that their assistance will not now be required.

About this time the Germans commenced their final retreat, and our lads were thenceforward kept busily engaged in the exciting pursuit of the defeated and discomfited foe. On 16th October Robert's regiment was in Hollebeke, then it moved to Warvacq, which had just been vacated by the enemy. Here our signallers had no sooner taken up their quarters in a stable than the German shells began to drop about them thick and fast. Three of Robert's comrades were wounded at his side. A fourth man now cherishes as a souvenir the shattered, jagged remnant of a spoon which in his pocket saved him from being injured by a splinter of a shell. The bursting of one of the shells, besides knocking down one of the cooks, had the peculiar effect of transforming the wall into a cloud of impalpable brick dust. The cook was not hurt, but when he crawled out of the debris and rose to his feet he was met with roars of laughter, for he was no longer white like a cook, but red—as red as a red Indian! His rifle, too, was as though it had been made of clay!

The next move was to Mouscron, then to Dottignies, where the regiment, consisting principally of reinforcements, was detained from 22nd October until 8th November, when it was ordered to St. Leger. Here the regiment took its turn in the front line, and came into touch with the enemy. Robert's duty now called him to be out all night mending the telephone wires, for they were blown to pieces every hundred yards. A German machine gun kept up its rattle all the time, but next day this was found to be a piece of camouflage, for the enemy had been silently stealing away under cover of the darkness.

We asked Robert what he was doing on the historic 11th of November, and he replied that on that day

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he was posted with two comrades at a deserted farmhouse on an eminence, in order to keep up communication with regimental headquarters by telephone, and with company headquarters by lamp-signalling. The news that the armistice had been declared came to the three lads, not over their telephone wire, but by the hand of a corporal from headquarters, and they at once passed on the message to their company. Then one of the boys ran and pulled up a boiling of potatoes out of the farmer's field. They cooked them in an old pot without any salt, and they ate these potatoes to their bully beef in celebration of the great day! Robert Doig had to attend to his signalling lamp outside the house, but the other lads brought him his ration to eat beside his work, and the three of them were very busy and very happy!

On the 15th November the regiment moved to Tourcoing, and on 3rd January 1919 to Marc-en-Baroeul, near Lille. There, on 26th January, Robert Doig was set free from army life.

Now he is back amongst us at his old bench, and no one who looks at the quiet, bright-faced lad as he deftly handles a leaf of gold in the titling of a book would ever imagine that he has endured such hardships—that he has passed through such a chapter of stern experiences.

His spirit is quiet and modest, and he boasts not of his doings. Of all that he has now narrated to us of his army life there is but little that is known amongst his fellows, or even in his own home circle. He does not regret that he has been in the army, for it has broadened his outlook upon life. But his army life, he says, seems to him now like a page turned over—like a dream that has come and gone!

WILLIAM DUNCAN

(AGED 27),

GUNNER (135816), ROYAL GARRISON ARTILLERY.

WILLIAM DUNCAN, compositor, is not a native of Dundee. He was born in Forfar, and in that town he received his education and served his apprenticeship. In February 1913 he entered our employment.

When war broke out and the youths were streaming off to join the colours, William, as he tells us, naturally felt that he must go with the others. In those days his friends used to look with big eyes at his smart, active figure. They were always saying to him in their thoughtful solicitude, "When are you going to join up?" So the thought of enlisting was never far from his mind.

When the Derby Scheme was being promoted in December 1915, William went forward to attest himself as willing to join the army, and on his attestation card he made intimation that he wished to join the Royal Garrison Artillery. Months passed, and William, who had now removed to Edinburgh, began to think the army had forgotten him. At last he was called to appear at Cockburn Street Recruiting Office, Edinburgh, where he was classified as a B1 man, fit for "garrison duty at home or abroad."

On 11th January 1917, William, in accordance with instructions, left Edinburgh by the evening train for Plymouth, having as a companion an Edinburgh lad who was bound for the same destination. William had no sleep that night, for the train was crowded with soldiers, noisy and hilarious, many of them on their way



WILLIAM DUNCAN.

William Duncan

back to the battlefields of France. He remembers that when some of these soldiers were asked how long the war was likely to last, they shouted assuringly that "The first seven years would be the worst!"

William arrived in London in the midst of a snow storm. As this was his first visit to the great city, it was only after repeated inquiries that he and his Edinburgh friend found their way to Paddington Station. Another long railway journey followed, and at 5 P.M. they arrived at Plymouth.

William felt awed as he passed through the great fortifications and gloomy doorways of Plymouth Barracks, but he soon found that the men around him had minds less serious than his own. A group of N.C.O.'s, who were smoking and chatting round the office fire, shouted to the new arrivals the important question—"Any football players among you?" In another office William, with fourteen other recruits, was duly enrolled, and an N.C.O. was detailed to take them to their sleeping quarters. He led them up three stairs into a dismal room which was furnished with rows of small iron bedsteads. In the centre of the room was a stove, and in the corner a great pile of palliasses and a heap of blankets. "Make your beds now," said the N.C.O., after which he showed the lads how to shake up the scanty straw in the palliasses, and how to dispose the three blankets which each had received.

The recruits were then sent to the messroom, in "K" block, for tea. Here William Duncan had his first experience of an army meal. He did not find it very appetising, for the bread was cut in huge shapeless lumps, and there was no butter—only a little jam, which did not suffice to go round the company. William could not swallow his bread—he felt so far from home—but he enjoyed the tea, and he was glad to discover that among his new comrades were a few

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lads from Scotland. Our recruits, had they known it, might now have spent a happy evening in the Church Army Recreation Hut, but as no one had told them about the hut, they wandered dismally back to their sleeping room.

The place now appeared to them even more cheerless than before. There were two gas jets flaring wildly at each end of the room. So feeble was the light emitted from one pair of jets that it seemed scarcely able to meet the light which streamed from the other pair. The night was bitterly cold, and the stove in the centre of the room had no fire burning behind its bars. The N.C.O. informed the recruits that they would have an issue of coal to-morrow, but he added that they could have a look round now for some scraps of wood wherewith to make a fire. Some of the lads went a-searching through the empty rooms. They commandeered a piece of an old partition, and raked a supply of cinders from another cold fireplace. Then they returned to their own quarters and lit the fire, and the fifteen comrades sat round the stove and talked to one another, and quite forgot that they were cold and far from home.

They did not sit up late, these young fellows; it was only 8.30 when they retired to rest. As other six recruits had come in before that time, there was not a palliasse for each of them; three lads had perforce to lie upon the bare floor. Sleep was slow in coming to William that night, but weariness at last overpowered him, and he slept till the morning bugle waked the barracks to the life and stir of another day.

The new recruits did not presume to attend parade that first morning, but they found their way to "K" block at 7.30 for breakfast. As our lad entered the messroom he was furnished with a basin and a plate; a little further along the room his basin was dipped for

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him in the tea bucket; still further along there was placed upon his plate a clumsy lump of bread without butter, and a piece of liver. William, who was not yet accustomed to the life around him, had no appetite, and he was glad when he escaped out of the crowded, noisy messroom.

The whole forenoon was occupied in supplying the fifty new recruits with their many articles of clothing, although there was little time wasted in taking measures. The sergeant gave but a glance at his man, and then threw at him—say, an overcoat. In the next store another sergeant threw a pair of pants; in a third, two pairs of boots; and so on from store to store. Some of the lads put on their overcoats, so that they might have their arms free to collect the other goods; some laid their overcoats on the floor, piled on them their possessions, and swung the load over their shoulder.

The next proceeding was to dress in the new uniform. This was a pleasure until it came to the adjusting of the puttees, when the men had trouble in attaining a workmanlike result. In the evening, however, the N.C.O. gave them some useful hints which helped them.

Dinner at Plymouth was a hearty meal—a generous supply of meat, with potatoes and cabbage, and a large piece of a flour pudding called “duff.” Afternoon was left free from duty, so that the men might have time to tie up their civilian clothing and hand it in to the quartermaster’s stores for dispatch to their friends at home. It was a painful duty to the lads, this parting with their old clothing.

“I wished that I could have gone myself inside the parcel,” says William Duncan. “I felt as if I was parting with my former happy life, with some portion of my own self. My chum felt the wrench even more than I did.” “What a life!” he exclaimed, as he looked

William Duncan

around on the rough ways of Plymouth Barracks. "I wish I was back in Edinburgh."

In the evening William and his friend repaired to the Church Army Recreation Hut, a wooden erection which adjoined the barrack square. The hut was furnished with writing tables and notepaper and envelopes. Here the lads took the opportunity of writing long letters to their friends at home, giving their impressions of barrack life, and telling how homesick they were feeling. Meanwhile at the end of the hut the piano was rattling off its lively jingle, sometimes under the nimble fingers of one soldier, sometimes manipulated by another. At the long buffet the good ladies of Plymouth were busily engaged in the retailing of tea and coffee and lemonade, in an atmosphere dusky with tobacco smoke.

Next morning the recruits, dressed in their new uniform, were summoned to parade, and during the forenoon they were introduced to the rudiments of drill. William fears he was rather awkward at the first movements. His clumsy hobnailed boots felt far too big for his feet, and he found himself unable to wheel around to right or left as smartly as he would have wished. He was consoled, however, when he observed that the other recruits seemed to be as awkward as himself. Some of them, indeed, were slow to learn which was their right foot and which their left.

Drill was resumed after dinner, and the lads were kept hard at work all afternoon. In the evening, as they were now properly clothed, they were permitted to leave the barracks. Puttees, however, had to be added to their attire before they went into the outer world, for these articles were not worn during hours of drill.

William says he will never forget his first stroll through the streets of Plymouth. He describes to us how he and half-a-dozen comrades went tramping

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down a narrow lane which led into the town, and how the noise of their clanking boots upon the cobblestones filled the street with a resounding echo. He sees in memory even yet a little Plymouth kiddie who stared at the squad, recognised that they were new men, and called out to them in his cheeky English way, "Sowljers, are ye?" causing the modest company to wince as they marched along.

William tells us also that he and his comrades found themselves in a pretty pickle when they came to the lighted streets and began to meet the officers of the service. The recruits had not as yet received any lessons in saluting. How were they to behave before these gentlemen? Which hand ought they to raise in the salute? What kind of a gesture were they expected to perform? William laughs yet when he thinks how he and his chums settled the difficulty by disappearing in some passage or by entering a shop door when any individual like an officer seemed to be coming towards them. The recruits felt that their stroll was not quite a success, and they returned home early.

Later in the evening their N.C.O. gave them a good deal of information regarding the ways and customs of the barracks. From him they purchased brass badges and numerals, which they fastened upon the shoulders of their tunics, for they felt that the addition of these ornaments would give them a fine soldierly appearance.

Next day the men were vaccinated, on account of which they were allowed a respite from drill of forty-eight hours, which by most of them was spent in bed. The week following they were inoculated, and again they were exempted from duty for a short time. With these exceptions the parades and squad drill went on from day to day, forenoon and afternoon, for a month. Saturday afternoons being free, William

William Duncan

Duncan and his chum went to see the R.G.A. football matches.

Sabbath forenoons were devoted to church parades, the men of the various denominations—Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Roman Catholic—parading in front of a certain block at a prescribed hour, and then marching off to their own place of worship. William fears that his own mind was not quite free from worldly pride as he went marching along in the great battalion of the Presbyterians, keeping step to the music of the band. He could not but be conscious that the streets were lined with the populace of Plymouth gazing with admiration at the fine soldierly bearing of the men of the R.G.A. Again, when returning from the service, William could not but yield to a feeling of levity when he observed that a puttee on the leg of one of the recruits had become unfastened. A puttee has this tantalising habit that, when once it gets loose, nothing will keep the band from slipping to the ground. The man marching behind will then tread upon it, thus causing the owner to trip, and so producing confusion all round. In this case the luckless recruit seized his troublesome puttee, broke the ranks, and ran to hide his head in the first open doorway.

William Duncan was inoculated, along with the other men, a second time, and soon thereafter he was sent in a draft of 200 men to Winchester, the great centre of artillery training.

It was a bitterly cold night in February when William and his comrades arrived in Winchester. There they were straightway marched through the darkness to Mornhill Camp, a huge establishment consisting of interminably long lines of wooden huts, each line denominated by a letter. In the "O" line, to which the draft was sent, there was accommodation for only 180 of the men; the remaining twenty, among whom was our William, were quartered in a hut in

“K” line. The hut was a shelter certainly from the cruel, biting wind, but there was no fire to warm the shivering boys. The blankets and palliasses were damp and cold, for they had not been in use for weeks.

That night was the most miserable which William ever spent in all his life, it was so cold—so very raw and cold. He did not remove his tunic, but he lay down to rest until the sun would rise again to bring fresh cheer and warmth. None of the lads could sleep—some of them coughed ominously all through those hours of darkness.

In the morning William rose to parade with unaccustomed pains in his limbs and head. Some of his comrades reported sick, and they were exempted from the duties and drills of the day. Towards evening William met some of the 180 men who had been lodged the previous night in “O” line, and from them he learned that their experience had not been any pleasanter than his own. They, too, had suffered from the cold and damp, and of their number no fewer than fifty men that morning had reported themselves sick.

After a week, passed in parades and drills, William and his comrades were ordered to muster at a certain empty hut, each man to bring with him a spoon. This last order caused them no little speculation. They could scarcely imagine that they were to be invited to sample some tasty dish, but to what other use could a spoon be put than to sup something? At the hut itself the mystery only deepened. The lads were admitted singly into the hut, as if into a palmist’s den, and in a short time each boy came out with a scared expression on his face. “Don’t be alarmed,” said the captain; “it’s nothing serious.” William entered in his turn, and found himself in the presence of the medical officer, who was robed in white from top to toe—only eyes and mouth and hands being exposed to view—a priest of mystery indeed! The medical officer

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took the spoon and put it into William's mouth in such a way as to press down the tongue and expose the throat. Then with a tuft of wadding on the end of a rod, the medical officer wiped a little mucus from the lining of the throat.

William learned, on coming out into the open air, that one of the 180 men in the "O" line had died of spotted fever, and that the medical officer was "swabbing the throats" of the others to find out if any of them had been infected with the dread disease.

The twenty lads were now taken back to their own quarters, and were told to stay indoors till further orders, for there must be no risk of any of them spreading infection. Food was laid down for them at the door of their hut. Next day they were ordered to tie up their palliasses and blankets and kits, and to march off with their bundles to the "O" line, where they were to be quartered along with about 160 of their former comrades, a score of these men having been dismissed by the medical officer as being free from infection. This made a total of 180 men who were looked upon as possible centres of danger.

For William Duncan this was a serious prospect which gave him no end of anxious thought. The 180 men were now confined to eight huts, and at first they were forbidden to go out of doors. Windows were kept open day and night, but a good fire was kept burning, and a plentiful supply of food was regularly brought to the doors of the huts. There were no parades in those anxious days, the only duty prescribed was that each man should gargle his throat twice a day. The medical officer's orderly was among the interned men, for he had carried the spotted fever case to hospital, and therefore he himself was a "case" for the present. The interned men had "symptoms" of course in plenty. Some men had pains in the head, some had pains in the back, some had lost their voice, and so on; but William

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Duncan still thinks that most of their complaints could be traced back to the inoculation, and to the subsequent night of cold and damp. He himself cannot say that at that time he ever felt much out of his usual health.

After a few days, throats were swabbed again, and the men were divided into two lots—40 negative cases, who showed no signs of fever, but who were still kept interned in a hut by themselves; and 140 positive cases, whose throats did show traces of fever. In the second lot was our lad, William Duncan. From now onward the men were all allowed to roam about in the surrounding fields, but were forbidden to mix with other troops. They were also taken out on route marches, which William greatly enjoyed. He was interested to notice, when passing through the village of Easton, that nearly every cottage of the little community displayed in its window a card bearing the printed name, number, and regiment of some member of the household who was serving in the army. Some windows showed two, three, or four cards. In walking through such a village, our lads were not allowed to break their ranks, nor were they permitted to hold any intercourse with the villagers. On one occasion they saw in the distance a body of troops marching forward to meet them, but to their dismay the order was given to "About turn," and to march away in haste, lest any germs should fly from their throats to infect the other troops. Another day, in order to prevent a similar meeting, our suspects were turned aside into a field, as William says, "like so many cattle." On Saturday afternoons, when all the world was joyful, they dared not mingle with their fellows at the football match. They were allowed, however, to take their stand in an adjoining field to watch the game.

Throats were again swabbed, and again William

William Duncan

was among the positive cases of fever. Some men who at last inspection were among the negative cases now showed positive symptoms, and were brought back to be placed among the positives. Those who for the second time were proved to be clear of the disease were set free to return to duty.

In the huts of the suspected cases life went on as before, rather wearily. The lads did their best to while away the tedium of their enforced idleness. In the daytime they played football, and in the evenings they held concerts amongst themselves. On Sundays they had a religious service, conducted by one of their number, a parson from Wales. They received letters, of course, and they were allowed to dispatch letters in return provided that they heated the sheets of paper at the fire before enclosing them in the envelope. William remembers that the postie who carried these letters, and who used to go little messages for the interned men, was himself at last arrested and put in confinement with the others as a "suspected carrier of infection."

Four weeks, and throats were swabbed once more. This time William's throat, to his immense relief, showed no traces of the disease, and he was transferred to the group of negatives, who were still under supervision.

Another week, another swabbing, and at last he was set free for life and work among the other troops.

Squad drill he practised now on the snow-covered ground; rifle drill also, in the open-air when the weather was fine, and indoors when the day was wet. Lectures, too, he attended, on the mechanism of the big 60-pounder guns, and he took his turns on the gun crews who were trained to serve these guns. He dug gun pits in the chalky soil; he helped to haul the huge monsters into position, and he camouflaged them with branches of trees and sods and grass. Fatigues,

William Duncan

route marches, physical exercises, and musketry practice filled these busy days to overflowing with healthful, interesting work.

After his course of training was finished William was transferred to the quartermaster's stores to deal out equipment to the various drafts which were leaving from week to week. He has vivid memories of the arrival of the first lot of American troops, for they were sent to Winchester for a few days' rest before crossing to France.

William was struck with the fine physique of these men, but he was amused at their attire. The fanciful cowboy hat might have passed without comment, but the white gaiters and light brown boots seemed far too gay for the stern work that lay before them. These Americans seemed to know but little of what had been happening in France, and they never wearied of asking questions about the war, especially if they came upon anyone who had been at the front.

"What like is it, Tommy, over there?" they used to inquire, and when Tommy told them some of his blood-curdling tales they turned away, saying "I guess we'll go back home."

"How long is the war to last, Tommy?" was another of their questions, and Tommy answered them with his usual comforting assurance that "the first seven years would be the worst."

The Americans were confident, however, that they would soon finish the war when they went over to France. They would never stop, they told William, until Fritz was driven back to Berlin.

Discipline among the Americans appeared to be less strict than with us. They had free and easy ways in regard to the saluting of their officers, yet there seemed to be a fine feeling of good comradeship among them all. An N.C.O., for example, would not scruple to throw off his tunic in order to help any private

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with some fatigue duty which seemed to be too heavy for him.

They were boastful, of course, these cousins of ours, and they marvelled when they were told how pitifully small was the pay of the British soldier—one shilling a day! They used to get a dollar and a half a day, and now they were to be paid overseas money besides.

William tells us about a typical Yankee who went to see the far-famed Cathedral of Winchester. "What fine building is this?" he asked, as he looked up at the carvings and buttresses. "How long do you say it took to build? Twenty years? Why, in America we could put up a place like that in twenty days!" He continued his stroll until he came to the Guild Hall. "What building is this?" he asked his guide. The guide knew that his American friend would not misunderstand his words, so he gazed up blankly at the building and replied—"I'm sorry I cannot tell you, sir; it was not there last night!"

The second lot of Americans who came over to this country were better fitted out than the first. They were shod with big, hobnailed boots, and they were otherwise equipped for rough work in the trenches. They appeared to be somewhat envious, however, of our puttees, or "leg wrappings," as they called them.

When the Americans had fairly commenced to arrive, they came in a steady stream—in thousands practically every other day. After a few days' rest in Winchester, they went off to the field of action. It was easy to see, William says, wherein consisted our "great reserve army" about which we used to hear so much.

We asked William if he had anything to tell us about the huts, canteens, and other organisations promoted by the various Churches for the welfare of the men in the army. We learned that there were about a score of these in active operation in and around Winchester, all of which did valuable work. Perhaps

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the Y.M.C.A., with its lectures and pictures, might be considered as winning most popularity. The Americans had their own Y.M.C.A., which carried on a picture house for the entertainment of the men, admission being free to the British soldier. William there saw on the screen good representations of "British Troops in Training," of "The Battle of the Somme," and of American scenery, which last always evoked thunderous applause.

William tells us that every evening, at the end of the entertainment, just when the feet of the audience were beginning to scrape and shuffle in the act of rising to leave the hall—at that moment the leader of the Y.M.C.A. rose to his feet, stepped forward, and with uplifted hand and the words, "One minute, boys!" he stayed the audience in their seats. Then he said, "Just a little prayer before we go," and by the power of a good man's personality, he uplifted their thoughts beyond time and place. The soldiers used to leave that hall feeling that it was good for them to have been at the American Y.M.C.A.

The Baptist Church also did well by the soldiers. Every week-night the church hall was open for the convenience of the men. On Sabbath afternoon there was a service for soldiers, with this special feature, that the men were asked to read the lesson themselves, verse about. "Now, who'll be next?" called out the leader; and one of the lads in khaki stood up and read his verse. But that was not all, for at the close of the service the boys were ushered into the hall, where they were regaled with tea and cakes and kindly converse by the good ladies of the congregation. Could human hearts have been kinder?

One more touch, and this time about our own lad. William Duncan went one Sunday evening to the soldiers' service in Winchester Cathedral. The great building was crowded with worshippers, and William

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and his comrade were obliged to go forward to the very front seat. What was William's surprise when, towards the close of the service, one of the office-bearers of the Cathedral came round and asked his comrade if he would assist in taking up the collection. The lad modestly declined, and the gentleman turned to William with the same request, assuring him that he would find no difficulty in fulfilling this service. William felt that it would be churlish to refuse, so he undertook the duty. During the singing of the last hymn, he passed the collection bag from pew to pew, and then took part in the final procession of the sidesmen up the aisle. William cannot but feel a worthy pride in having once taken duty in the world-famed cathedral.

William Duncan was never sent over to France. Day in, day out, among the various camps of Winchester, he faithfully performed his duties in the quartermaster's stores, receiving and issuing and registering clothing, rifles and blank ammunition, picks and shovels and barrows, harness, emergency rations, and a multitude of other things. Sometimes the monotony of his life grew irksome to his spirit, and he yearned for change and excitement. Men came back from the war and sympathised with him; they would rather be in France, they said, than in home service. William was conscious, however, that it was through no fault of his own that he had not been sent to the field of battle. He knew also that it was only by the careful and accurate fulfilment of duties such as lay to his hand that the wheels of a great army organisation could be made to run smoothly and well. So, like a good soldier, he stood manfully at his post of duty to the very end.

JOHN E. FORREST

(AGED 19),

PRIVATE (79077), 31ST MACHINE GUN COMPANY, 10TH IRISH DIVISION.

JOHN FORREST, compositor, has just finished his apprenticeship with us, the usual allowance of time having been made for the years he spent in the army. He was born in Aberdeen, and he was educated in Kittybrewster Public School. His father was a compositor, and for that reason the boy commenced to work in a printing office in Aberdeen. In 1913 he came to Caxton House, as his parents had removed to Dundee.

Why did this quiet-mannered boy think of joining the army? Because his companions were all talking about enlisting; because there was a spice of adventure in the air; because, when duty calls, a youth of spirit cannot close his ears.

Several times, in the course of the year 1915, John Forrest and his chum went along to Bell Street Drill Hall to apply for admission into the Dundee Cycle Corps, or into the Dundee Artillery, but at that time both of these were full. They tried also the Royal Engineers in Taylor's Lane with like unsucccess.

Then there came down from Dunkeld a sergeant, recruiting for the Scottish Horse, and there appeared in the papers an advertisement announcing that the same sergeant was waiting for recruits at the Ward Road Gymnasium. This caught the fancy of our youth, and, as his parents were willing to let him take his choice, he made his application. The sergeant, pleased with the boy's appearance, had him medically examined, and gave him a week in which to work his warning with his employers.

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On Monday evening, 29th November 1915, John Forrest said good-bye to his friends, and trained to Dunkeld, the headquarters of the Scottish Horse. There might be about 300 youths who came off the train that winter night. In some kind of order they were marched down the road to the front of the house which was then occupied as army offices.

Here for half an hour stood our devoted band, in the dark night, in the falling snow, ere they were admitted into the rooms, where men were busy noting all the particulars and details of the new recruits—their name and age, their height and weight, the colour of their eyes and hair, the proportion of the army pay they wished to be allotted to their dependants, &c. Thereafter the squad was divided up among the three brigades—one at Inver, another at Dunkeld, and the third at Birnam. John Forrest, with sixteen or seventeen other youths, was allotted to the 3rd/1st Scottish Horse, and he was quartered in a room of a small cottage in Birnam. There were no seats in the room, no comfort, and no food. The lads began to grumble, and a corporal directed them to go across to the Birnam Institute, where they could have something to eat. The lads were cheered by the food, and they returned to their billet in better humour. They received two blankets apiece, and were told to “make the best of it.” They managed to lie down, and although they covered the whole floor till there was not an inch to spare, they slept in peace and good content.

Morning came all too soon. At five o'clock, in pitch darkness, a corporal, with a stable lantern in his hand, knocked, and pushed the door ajar. “Anybody here wants to see the doctor?” he shouted. Bewildered by the question, one fellow turned on his pallet and called—“What would you want to see the doctor for?” The corporal grunted—“What would anybody want to



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see the doctor for?" and closed the door behind him. The recruits, however, understood that this morning visit meant reveille, and they rose and went upstairs to wash; then down again to parade in front of the house, where the sergeant was waiting for them.

From Birnam our lads were now marched over to Dunkeld, to await the coming of the major, who was to inspect them. Three hours they stood in the snow and the cold, but at last he arrived. He asked a few questions at each of the lads, then handed them over to an officer to be sworn into the service. In groups of about a score at a time, each youth laid his hand upon the open Bible, and with his other hand held aloft, he vowed to be true to King and country.

After dinner John Forrest and his comrades were sent to the quartermaster's stores in Dunkeld for their equipment and uniform—all but the bonnie Highland bonnet, which would come later.

Cavalry drill, on foot to begin with, now commenced in earnest. Every morning the recruits were marched to the Golf Course, where from nine o'clock to twelve they practised troop drill, forming sections, and other simple and easy movements. Our boy enjoyed his new life immensely. His physique was improving every day with the fresh air, the healthy exercise, and the jolly comradeship.

Horses seemed to be scarce in those days, but they came at last. John Forrest had no fear of a horse at that time, not till later on. He remembers how, one morning, at parade, his sergeant told him to go to Birnam Hotel stables for a horse, and to prepare for riding school at nine o'clock. Now the horse he received was one which happened to be newly out of the sick stable, to which it had been sent after some accident. John, with the aid of a corporal, managed to saddle the animal and to lead it to the riding school, which was being held in a field behind the hotel. The

class comprised some sixty practised riders, besides the new recruits, who were kept in a corner by themselves, to learn how to sit on a horse, how to hold the reins, and how to hold on without the reins. The sergeant who was leading the squad of recruits began the lesson by walking his own horse slowly round the park, the lads following. Next exercise was "cross stirrups," which means throwing the loose stirrups up crosswise over the saddle in front of the rider, who must then keep his seat by pressure of the knees alone. Twice round the ring the sergeant led the little troop. Then all of a sudden he called "Trot!" and before John knew where he was, his horse, fresh as it was from the stable, bolted off, cantered twice round the park and played the trick which formerly had sent it to the sick stable—jumped over a low wall and gave two or three bucks to clear the burden off its back. What could our new horseman do? At the first jump he clung, desperately, to the saddle, then—he was pitched away over the animal's hindquarters!

"What did you think when you were falling?" we asked. "I didn't think much," he replied; "but when I landed on the ground, I heard the sergeant-major of the school shouting—'Who told you to get off there?'"

John's awkward fall had stopped the "ride," and had caused some confusion in the school, therefore the officer was displeased. The horse itself was in no wise disconcerted, for it cantered forward a few yards and then began to nibble the grass, quite satisfied with its performance. Undaunted by the fall, John followed his steed, climbed again into the saddle, and rode out the remainder of the lesson without further mishap.

Such was John's first experience of horse-riding, but not his last. He quickly became an expert rider, and many were the grand gallops he had with his squadron over the beautiful country of which Dunkeld is the centre.

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In February 1916 John was selected for a draft to go to Louth, Lincolnshire, for the filling up of gaps in the ranks of the 2nd/1st Scottish Horse. In Louth John was stationed for two months, after which the brigade was ordered to the sand dunes of Sutton-on-Sea for coast patrol duty. Here there was little cavalry practice—only the exercising of the horses on the sands. Every night the men patrolled the shore (on foot), reporting to the next brigade along the coast that all was clear. They each carried a rifle and a bayonet, but as yet they had had no training in the use of these. “Rather eerie work it was,” John says, “to walk along the water’s edge during the night, with the salt sea waves splashing over your boots when the tide was high.”

John well remembers the night when the zeppelins paid their visit to Edinburgh. About five o’clock in the afternoon he and his comrades observed six or seven black objects floating in the sky, far out at sea. Telescopes were brought into use, the zeppelins were recognised, and a message was wired to London that enemy airships were on the way. Until dark the zeppelins hovered about the Lincolnshire coast, then they were seen no more. Next morning the newspapers told of the bombs that had been dropped on Edinburgh! From that time the zeppelins paid almost nightly visits to the east coast of England.

On 14th September the squadron of Scottish Horse, now dressed in drill khaki and pith helmets, left Sutton-on-Sea, trained to Devonport, and embarked on the “Caledonia” for an unknown destination. There were 2000 cavalymen on board, but no horses and no guns. As this voyage was John’s first experience of ocean travel, everything was new and interesting to him. The men’s quarters were on the lower deck, in a large room filled with three dozen tables arranged in rows. Fourteen men were allocated to each table,

their equipment being supported in racks above their heads. For beds, they were each supplied with a hammock and two blankets, and they were allowed to sleep either on deck or below. If a man chose to sleep below he would be half suffocated with the heat; if he preferred the deck, then he had to rise at 3 A.M., before the ship's crew came round with the hose pipe to wash the deck.

At three o'clock in the morning of the 18th the vessel put into the harbour of Gibraltar in the glare of the searchlights from the Rock. During the day our lads had an opportunity of witnessing the fine marksmanship of the Gibraltar gunners. A tramp steamer which happened to come sailing along was signalled to stop, but it paid no heed to the signal. A shot was sent across its bows as a warning, then another across its stern, the shots almost grazing the ship as they splashed into the water.

In the afternoon of the same day the "Caledonia" left Gibraltar, arriving in the harbour of Malta on the 21st. Here the vessel lay for five days, beside two Red Cross boats and a great many other vessels. A French destroyer made its appearance, and drew up close beside the "Caledonia." Our lads were amused by the performances of the French sailors at their daily work and drill. They seemed to be always in high spirits, these Frenchmen, and their band played the whole day long.

Our lads were interested also to see the crowd of Maltese fruit-sellers who besieged the transport in their little cobbles. Some of our men made great fun by throwing coins into the water, when instantly the fruit boys, like very fishes, dived after the money, cleverly caught it before it reached the bottom, and brought it up in their teeth.

After taking in coal and fresh stores, our vessel made its way along the north coast of Africa, the protecting

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destroyers circling round all the while. Once or twice, when a ship appeared on the horizon, one of the destroyers would dart off to meet it, while the other circled round the "Caledonia" and sent up a smoke screen which hung around the transport like a curtain, hiding it completely from the outer world. So close did our vessel sail to the shore that it almost seemed as if it meant to run aground. This caused a big swell to rebound off the land, and the vessel heaved so much that not a few of the men were laid prostrate with sea sickness.

To John Forrest, however, the whole voyage was a delightful experience. Gazing over the side of the ship into the clear blue depths beneath he could see the porpoises, dozens of them, swimming along in expectation of the food which was thrown out from time to time. Looking upward, he saw with wonder the flocks of brightly-coloured birds, which followed the ship from one headland to another. Then on the morning of the 30th September he looked out upon the magnificent prospect of Salonica, its white terraces shining in the bright sunshine against the picturesque background of hills and trees.

Before mid-day John was on the shore, marching with his comrades (200 or 300 in number) to Summerhill, the base camp for the Salonica forces. He was disenchanted quickly in regard to Salonica. It was no longer beautiful; it was evil-smelling and dirty and ruinous; the inhabitants were poor and wretched as they sat by the roadside eating and selling their fish and chips. At Summerhill the men were informed that they were now to be transferred from the Scottish Horse into the Machine Gun Corps. The draft was then broken up into groups and distributed among the different companies of the line. John's squad was allocated to the 10th Irish Division, a body of men who had earned some reputation both for bravery in battle

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and for turbulence in times of peace. They had suffered much, these fellows—first at Gallipoli, and afterwards when they were the only British division to carry on the unequal struggle in Serbia, and when they were making their heroic and arduous retreat. They had now come down from the snow-clad mountains of Serbia to hold the British line upon the sweltering plains of Macedonia, and our cavalrymen were to be sent up-country to support them at the battle front.

The Irishmen's camp was distant from Salonica about seventy kilometres, for in that country the roads are marked off in kilos, not in miles. One fine morning our draft of seventy-two Scottish Horsemen was put in motion for the long march to the Struma Valley. A stiff march it was, the hardest any of these men had ever undertaken, for the ground to be crossed was hilly to the utmost degree. The road was good, that was one comfort, for it was the highway to Seres and the best road in the country, but the steepness of it was extreme. Up one long, steep climb, then as steeply down the other side of the hill to the dry and stony ravine at the bottom. No sooner at the foot of one slope than another higher and more fearful climb presented itself before them—higher each day, till it seemed as though the track would reach the clouds. What an experience for our cavalrymen, accustomed only to the joyous gallop of a gallant steed! If a man, laden with his load of say 96 lbs., with a cavalry kitbag under his arm, with a bandolier and a water-bottle and a haversack and a ground sheet and a rifle and ninety rounds of ammunition—if a man, staggering under such a burden, fell out of the ranks and lay down exhausted by the roadside, the Red Cross van was following to pick him up and give him a drive until he again recovered strength to take his place in the ranks.

John Forrest held out bravely, and he carried his

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load and kept step with the stoutest of them all. Five days they marched, resting each night at a rest camp which had been planted by the wayside for the accommodation and refreshment of the various drafts who were continually passing to and fro. The 70th kilo was reached at last, and the worst of the journey was over.

Now from the summit of the hill John sees spread out before his eyes a vast green plain, with the Struma river (like the Tay at Perth) meandering through the centre of the scene. In pre-war days the plain was cultivated with maize and grass; now again these crops have grown up rank and tall. On the other side of the plain, in the far distance, rise hills, loftier even than those John had already crossed. He is informed that the British line lies in the plain, just on the farther side of the Struma; the Bulgarian camps are planted on the distant hills beyond.

Downhill then march our cavalrymen to the camp of the 31st Machine Gun Company, to which they have been allotted. They are to be employed as drivers in the transport service for the bringing of munitions and food from the 69th kilo dump at the top of the hill down to the camp on the plain. Their first business is to set up their bivouacs, those lowly shelters which give about as much protection as an umbrella; then they indulge in the luxury of a good rest.

On the following morning John and his comrades were appointed to their mule teams, and to the duties of the day. Where are these mules stabled, think you? There are no stables in sight, no buildings whatever; buildings would but bring down the artillery fire of the enemy. The mules, one hundred in number, are tied on a "mule line" or strong rope fastened from one post to another. The head of each mule is tethered to this line, a space of only three paces being allowed for each animal. "But don't the mules kick each other," we

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asked John, "if they are left so free to move? Don't the animals stampede off with the rope?" "No," he replied; "the mules are wonderfully quiet and docile. They stand quite still when they know that their head is tied. They may kick one another now and again, but they seldom stampede."

Days rolled on quietly in a routine of transport duties until 29th October, when it was announced that an engagement would take place that very night, and that our machine gun men must move forward to support the infantry. At once the camp was thrown into a state of activity and excitement. The machine guns were packed on the backs of the mules, and everything was put in perfect readiness. Then, as the shades of night descended upon the plain, our company made their way by country roads and across the fields to the ruins of what once had been a village. Here the mules were unloaded. In absolute silence the men, led by a guide, and aided by the occasional gleam of a flash lamp, now carried the guns stealthily forward by way of sunken roads and deep communication trenches into the front line, where they took up the positions assigned to them. Rain commenced to fall in a downpour, in sheets of water, the like of which our lads had never seen at home. Suddenly, with a crash, the artillery behind them opened fire, and for several hours the guns kept up their continuous thunder. Suddenly again the guns lengthened their range to allow our infantry to make their forward rush. The rush was made successfully, and with few casualties another village was captured by our troops. John Forrest will never forget this his baptism of shot and shell. He is not likely to forget the date—the 30th October 1916—for it was his twenty-first birthday, and he was now a man!

A few days in the trenches, and our machine gunners were drawn back for a fortnight's rest. Another little

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raid followed, and another time of quiet. So life went on all through the winter months. The British line was advanced so far that our artillery was enabled to bombard the enemy in the mountains, with, however, no great success. The winter was not cold, but the abundant rains made the country like a great quagmire. Of snow there was very little; if any fell during the night it melted away under the next day's sunshine. One evening who should come into camp asking for John Forrest but his shopmate, Colin Smith, from the Scottish Horse, who were quartered in the neighbourhood. The two lads spent the evening in talking over old times and mutual friends, and one can imagine how much, in such surroundings, they would enjoy each other's company.

As summer approached, a new danger—the mosquito—made its appearance on the plains of Macedonia. The British troops, who so little feared the Bulgarian shot and shell, were now compelled to retreat before these tiny insects, otherwise all the men would soon have been laid low with malarial fever. About the month of June, therefore, a withdrawal was made to the southern bank of the Struma, the troops setting the plain on fire as they left their advanced positions. It was an impressive sight, John says, to see the great expanse of maize fields blazing like a mighty furnace.

The men were now supplied with mosquito bivouacs, but even these screens were not a complete protection against the persistent little plagues. John was amused to watch his transport comrades as they came out of their bivouacs of a morning. One man would have his eyes swollen, another his nose, while others would have their arms studded with blisters. The man in the trenches, how then was he defended? On his hands were huge leather gloves; over his face was a mask (fitted with glass goggles), which came down under-

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neath his tunic to protect his neck; round his neck was hanging his gas mask, ready for instant use; while on the top of his head was his good steel helmet—a fearsome looking creature he was, indeed!

There were no raids during the summer, but the stretch of country which our infantry had vacated on the farther side of the Struma was patrolled daily by the cavalry to keep it in British possession. “But,” we asked, “did the Bulgarians permit our cavalry to patrol the unoccupied ground in that way?” “Yes,” was the reply; “the Bulgarians were good sportsmen; they didn’t interfere with the cavalry. There used to be a little rifle shooting, but that was all. It looked as if the Bulgarians didn’t want to fight. They sometimes even sent us word when they meant to attack. I can give you an instance of that. In the month of August an announcement was made that our divisional sports would be held in a village called ‘Orl Jack.’ We were all looking forward to the competitions. I myself was intending to compete for the speed test at machine gun work, and I think I would have had a good chance of winning the first prize. But on the night before the expected sports didn’t the Bulgarians come down to a house where they used to exchange shots with our patrols, and didn’t they fix up a notice saying that as they intended to shell our aerodrome next morning at 10 o’clock we had better remove the aeroplanes to safety! Thinking this message was just a hoax we paid no heed to it, with the result that at 10 A.M. sharp ‘Johnnie Bulgar’ sent over his shells ‘thick and heavy,’ levelled our aerodrome, smashed all the ‘planes, spoilt our divisional sports, and destroyed my chance of a prize.”

During the summer John’s work was very light. At 5 A.M. he generally set off with his mules to bring down from the food dump the day’s rations for the troops, arriving back in camp by 10 A.M. Work was

then supposed to cease, as the heat of the sun was so strong, but at mid-day the mules had to be taken down to the Struma to drink. On one of these occasions the Bulgarians began to shell the company at the waterside. Men and mules retired with all speed, but in the hurry three of the mules broke loose, ran back into the river, and at once began to sink in a quicksand.

The men ran to the assistance of the struggling animals. The whole transport of twenty or thirty men were in the river all at once, shouting and pulling and splashing. Alas! the men found that they themselves were sinking in the treacherous sand, and only with great difficulty did they succeed in getting back to firm ground with one of the drowning mules. The second mule had now only its head above water, and of the third only the nose was visible. All the animals were dragged out at last, alive! When the third mule, which had been in the river for nearly two hours, was brought to *terra firma*, it gave itself a good shake to clear itself of all unpleasant memories, and ran off to the lines and to the forage shed.

When duties were light the transport men rested in their bivouacs or amused themselves with their mascot donkey, a little creature which had been born only a few weeks before John came to the camp. Once the donkey played the lads an unkind trick. John tells us how it happened:—"On the arrival of our own rations from the store, it was the duty of the orderly corporal to take charge of them until he had time to hand them to the men. On this occasion he put them under his little bivouac, thinking they would be quite safe, as all the men were on the 'mule lines' at the grooming. But 'Neddy' sniffed around, uncovered the heap, and started a-feeding on the bread and cheese. The jam pots he broke open with his feet, and when the men returned from their work they looked with dismay

upon the mischief he had wrought. Cheese and bread were strewn about in fragments; plum and apple jam was smeared all over the culprit's nose and feet. The lads chased the donkey away with a beating, but he seemed not to vex his mind over the matter. The boys had just to be contented with short rations for that day."

In the middle of September the whole division was ordered to pack up and leave the country, for what destination our lads were not informed. The march down to the sea seemed easier than the journey up; perhaps by this time the lads were hardened to heavy work. From Salonica the infantry set sail first, our transport lads following in another vessel with the mules. It was a difficult business getting the animals on board, but it was accomplished without accident. The pet donkey "Neddy," unfettered, trotted like a dog at the rear of the drove.

On 30th September 1917—one year exactly since John had landed at Salonica—the ship set sail. Our transport men had now their work before them, for there were 3000 animals on board, all of which had to be cleaned and fed by the men of the different units. Rough weather, a heaving vessel, and the smell of the animals soon made our lad sea-sick, but he never shirked his duty, although he felt at one time that he would not care although the ship should go to the bottom.

After three days of this trying experience the ship arrived at Alexandria. There the boys packed on the train their animals and waggons, and journeyed to Ismailia, at the edge of the desert. A three days' march followed, with pack mules and waggons, by the side of the Suez Canal to Kantara, the infantry base of the Egyptian forces. Here they again packed their mules into railway waggons, packed themselves into open trucks (thirty men squeezing into each truck),

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and rolled through the night to Raffa, in the centre of the infinite desert. The mules were now loaded with their packs upon their backs, a score of camels with Egyptian drivers having been added to assist in the transport work. Water, of course, was scarce in that thirsty land. Each man was limited to one water bottle (one quart) per day for drinking and washing. Many a time John Forrest had to shave with a little of his morning's tea and wash his face with his lather brush, if he wished to wash at all. At Raffa John for the first time saw the whole of the Irish Division, which he was now to accompany on the march to Palestine.

It was a lovely moonlight night when the three columns (the 29th, 30th, and 31st Irish Infantry Brigades) set forth across the desert. The infantry marched four abreast, not on the toilsome sand, but on a wonderful new track—a strip of wire-netting laid down across the sandy wastes for the convenience and comfort of the marching armies. The camels and mules, however, were not allowed to walk on the netting; they were required to keep to the sand. For three nights the great procession wended its way to the north, resting during the heat of the day in bivouacs and tents, and finally encamping in sight of Beersheba, which at that time was in the hands of the Turks.

Here the lack of water became exceedingly trying. Our transport were obliged to go back eight miles with their animals to get water for them. It was a pathetic sight to witness the thousands of animals patiently waiting their turn to drink at the water troughs, which were kept filled with distilled water brought in pipes all the way from the coast. Poor little "Neddy" was amissing when our lads arrived at the troughs. He had trotted along bravely all the way from Raffa, but it was evident that the

journey was proving too much for him, and now he had fallen out of the ranks. Doubtless some of the other transport squads would pick him up, and would befriend the good little fellow. John was interested here to see the long lines of camels—miles upon miles of them—bearing forward with stately stride their huge loads of rations and stores for the army.

At the camp before Beersheba it was easy to see that some great attack was in preparation. Huge guns pulled by caterpillar tractors were everywhere in evidence. Field guns and all kinds of war material were being brought up the line in great haste, and were being hurried off to their allotted positions.

At last all was in readiness, and there took place the great advance of the Palestine forces (British, French, Australian, and New Zealand). It commenced with a terrific bombardment all along the line, and resulted on 5th November 1917 in the capture of Beersheba. Our division then moved to Gaza, which was taken on the 7th November, the Turks being driven off in retreat.

The excitement of these stirring times and the strenuousness of his work were now beginning to injure the health of our boy. He thinks that ever since he left Salonica he had been suffering from a touch of malaria, and now, with a temperature of 105·4, he was carried away from his camp at Gaza to the hospital at Cairo.

In this way John Forrest missed the glory of the capture of Jerusalem, which took place on 9th December, and he missed our triumphal entry into the Holy City! He had this consolation on his sickbed in Cairo, that he was being attended by a Dundee doctor (Dr. Charles Kerr). From the doctor he received some Dundee newspapers, which he read with keen interest. In a fortnight John had recovered sufficiently to be sent across to the machine gun camp at Heliopolis, on

the outskirts of Cairo. At the end of another month he was again sent up the line to rejoin his company, which he found in bivouacs at Wady-el-Jib, on the other side of Jerusalem.

John was disappointed with Jerusalem. He had been expecting to see something very wonderful in so famous a city, but he saw nothing but poverty and dirt and neglect. He did not see Old Jerusalem, for the soldiers were not permitted to go there unless they were in charge of an officer provided with a permit from the Governor of Jerusalem, but he fears that even in Old Jerusalem the glory of former days has somehow passed away.

In the camp of Wady-el-Jib John was quartered for some months. His duty was still to bring forward from the store dumps the daily rations for the troops at the front. The army was in hilly country now, on ground which was too hard for trench digging, but the cavalry had plenty of scope for riding up the valley of the Jordan. The hills were terraced with olive trees, which the soldiers were cautioned not to injure. The men used to take the liberty, however, of helping themselves to grapes and oranges, which were everywhere in abundance.

During these months John was a witness of the preparations which were everywhere being made for a further advance against the Turks. New store dumps were established, new water troughs were erected, our line of artillery was strengthened with additional guns, and stores of ammunition were brought forward in readiness for the attack. Steel helmets now took the place of the pith helmets; and, one day, John was instructed to draw extra water bottles from the store. By this he knew that the day of battle was at hand, for, by General Allenby's new orders, the soldiers, in every engagement, were required to carry two water bottles.

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At last all was in readiness, and at ten o'clock on the night appointed our heavy artillery opened a furious bombardment, which was kept up for several hours. Finally the order was given for the infantry to advance.

The Turks waited not for the coming of our men, but fled in complete disorder, leaving everything on the ground—tents, rations, cooking utensils, cigarettes (a large stock and very welcome to our lads), big field guns by the dozen.

Forty miles our boys pursued the fleeing enemy, and John Forrest and his comrades were nearly exhausted when they reached the outskirts of Nablus. Here the Turks endeavoured to make a stand, but a night and a day of artillery bombardment again put them to flight. Nablus was taken on 20th September, and again hundreds of waggons and gun carriages and a huge accumulation of all sorts of war material fell into our hands. Our boys tarried not to count the booty; off again they set in pursuit of the foe, and stayed not their forced marches until they reached Haifa, about fifty miles to the north of Nablus. Haifa was taken on 23rd September.

A few weeks afterwards there came the welcome news that the entire Turkish army had been surrounded and had surrendered. John saw the Turkish General Staff brought in as prisoners, and never before had he witnessed such a miserable looking set of men. Some of them had jute bags tied round their feet to serve as boots; some had bags adapted as breeches; some wore old worn tunics—all were dirty and tattered. Their German friends, however, were equipped like gentlemen!

John Forrest had now seen the end of the war in Palestine. The 10th Irish Division was drawn back to Wady Dougal, near Jerusalem. Alas! his enemy, the malaria, once more laid him low. On the back of a

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camel, rolling like a ship at sea, he was transported to the train which carried him to Alexandria. Recovering in a few weeks, he was sent as a transport driver to the school of machine gun instruction at Zeitoun. It was while he was here that the world was thrilled with the news that the armistice had been signed.

A celebration dinner was held in the camp at Zeitoun. The table was spread with a clean white cloth that day, a thing unknown to the boys since leaving home. It was decorated with flowers for the occasion, and it was laden with steak pie and plumduff and pudding and nuts and apples and oranges and grapes and figs and dates. The lads feasted, and rejoiced that peace had once more come down upon the earth, that their homes and friends were safe, that their warring days were over! As they retired from the room they were handed their jugs of beer, which they drank under the shining, singing stars in seal of eternal comradeship!

On 28th January 1919 John Forrest took farewell of his comrades of the transport service, and hied him homeward—*via* Italy to Le Havre for medical inspection and creosole baths and new clothes, then across the sea to dear old Blighty! Wasn't it grand!

All his manifold hardships and dangers already beginning to fade from his memory, John had now only to present himself at Kinross for his final discharge. Then on 29th February a comfortable, swift-rolling carriage sped him onward to meet his dear ones, father and sister, who had come to the Tay Bridge platform to welcome him, and in great thankfulness to lead him back to the peace and shelter of home, where his mother was awaiting him.

JOHN FRASER

(AGED 24),

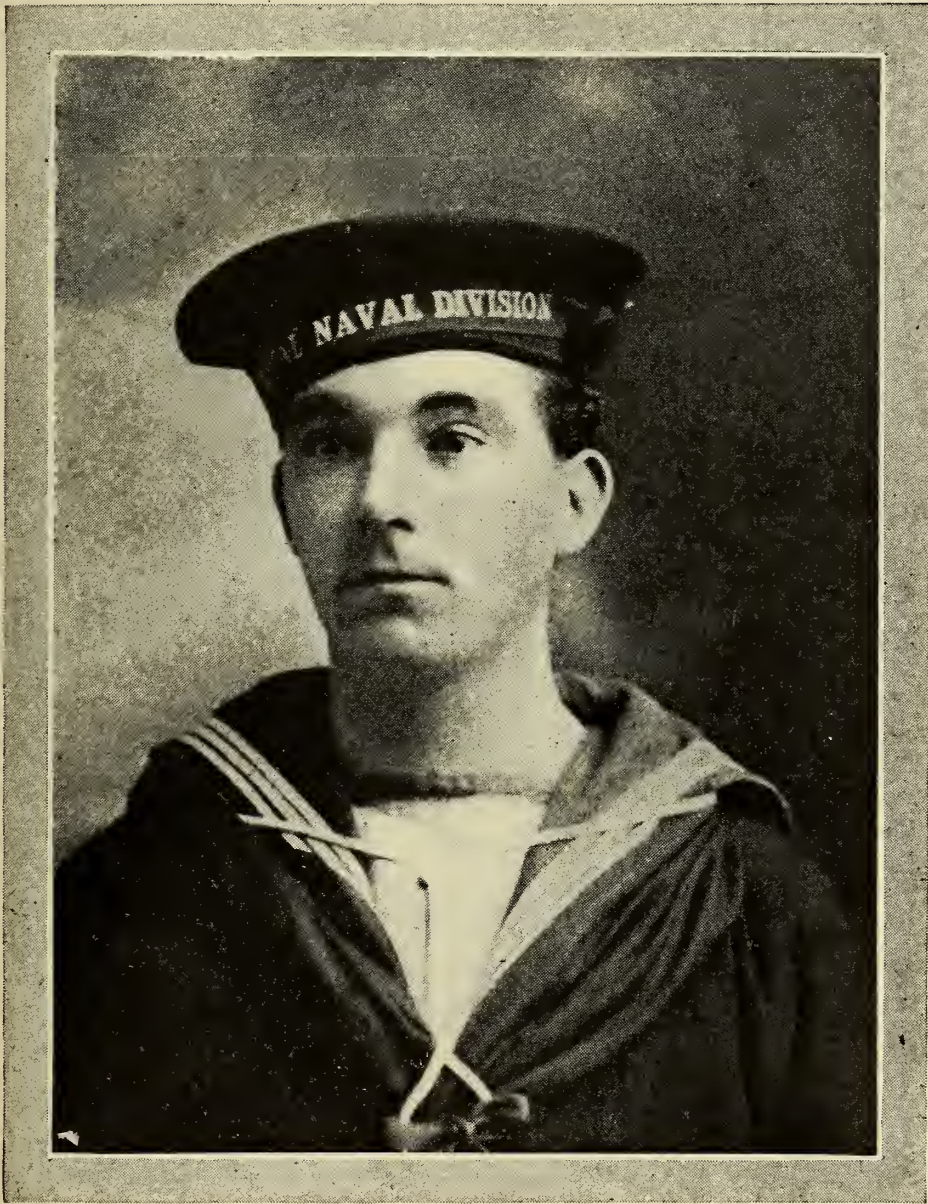
ABLE SEAMAN (CZ/5346), HOOD BATTALION, ROYAL NAVAL DIVISION.

JOHN FRASER, printer, served his apprenticeship with us in the years 1905-1912. He had received his education at Hill Street Public School, and he had worked for a year in a sawmill before he came to learn his trade.

When the war broke out, John, as he tells us, was "keen on it." Having been four years in the Royal Engineers (Territorials) at Broughty Castle, he knew something about military and naval operations, and he felt that it behoved him to do what he could for his country.

One day, however, as John stood at his printing machine, he was suddenly seized with a violent spasm of pain. He collapsed, was carried home, and was operated upon. His shopmates all thought that he, at least, would never be in the army. They were wrong, for John had set his heart on being in the Naval Division. In May 1915 he went down to the "Unicorn" in response to an advertisement calling for recruits for the Naval Brigade.

It was the first time John had been on board the "Unicorn," so when he went up the gangway he was struck with the neat and tidy appearance of the old warship, with its model guns and instruments for training. The chief petty officer took the prospective recruits (thirty in number) under his charge, noted down all particulars, and lined them up for the doctor. Two lads at a time were admitted into a little cabin for examination, and, in his turn, John passed his inspection satisfactorily.



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Next evening the lads again presented themselves at the "Unicorn" to receive the documents engaging their services. They took the oath of loyalty, all of them in one group, a Bible having been passed from hand to hand as a pledge of their fidelity. Having received a week's leave to make arrangements for leaving home, they were instructed to report on a day appointed.

On Monday, 1st June, John and his new comrades—one hundred in number—once more mustered at the "Unicorn." They were marched by the chief petty officer to the Tay Bridge Station; they were given their tickets for Govan (the headquarters of the R.N.V.R.), and they were off!

At Govan a naval man was waiting to lead the party to the training hall. Here were assembled a large number of recruits from all parts of the country—there might now be 500 of them in all. Tea was first served out to put the lads at their ease—tea in white cups and saucers, accompanied with cakes! Thereafter the naval officers lined up the recruits, four deep, and read to them a great many rules and instructions regarding the service; told them they were bound for the Crystal Palace, London, for training, and gave them good advice as to the wisdom of allotting part of their pay to their dependants at home. After all particulars regarding each recruit were again written down, the lads were told that success in their career would depend entirely upon their conduct and abilities. If they were considered suitable they would be passed into the navy; if not, they would be sent to land service.

Once more our recruits were lined up in fours, and now, headed by a naval brass band playing inspiring music, they were marched amid cheering crowds through the streets of Govan to the railway station. A bag of sandwiches having been put into their hands, the train moved off for London.

Next morning they are in the Crystal Palace. John Fraser's eyes open wide with wonder as he goes marching through the lovely grounds and as he looks around on all the beautiful buildings and lakes and fountains. A naval officer inspects the recruits, examines their papers, and lectures the lads again about their privileges and their responsibilities. Another officer inquires if any of them have had experience of soldiering or of naval work, and he notes down the replies. The lads are then instructed to store their personal belongings in a great guardroom, and to adjourn to the dining-hall for refreshments. Here a surprise is in store for them. The dining-hall is a spacious, bright, and beautiful room with glass walls, looking out upon the grounds. It is crowded with tables, which are covered with white cloths, and set out with cups and saucers and plates of bread cut ready to hand—like a hotel, like a crystal palace! There are orderlies, too, running to and fro to serve these guests of ours, to fill their cups with delicious tea, and to load their plates with boiled ham—as much as they could eat. John tells us he wondered what would be the next magical development. He says:—"I enjoyed the feast after having travelled all night, and after having listened to so many lectures; it put me and the other fellows in good heart to be treated so!"

This repast over, our recruits lined up outside the dining-hall, and an officer called the roll. One assistant instructor gave the recruits their official numbers, and another gave to each his identification disc. The disc was of fibre, of the size of a half-crown. Upon it was written—"Fraser, John, O.S.C.Z. [meaning "Ordinary Seaman, Clyde Division"], 5346, Presbyterian." It was to be worn round the neck, next the skin, in case the sad day might come when the wearer might not be able to give his own name when asked.

The next proceeding was to break up the squad into

sections, sixteen in each, and to march them off to see their sleeping quarters. These were located in "China Town," a great hall, decorated with Chinese figures, Chinese paintings, and mirrors. The hall was divided by means of low partitions into about two hundred and fifty small pens or cubicles. To each man was allotted one of these pens with its accompanying hammock, also a pair of blankets, which he deposited on the floor in readiness for bedtime. Hither he conveyed for safe keeping his own belongings, which he had formerly left in the guard-room.

"Fall in!" and the men march to a round kiosk in front of the orderly room. Here, after receiving further instructions regarding the routine and discipline of the Palace, they are detailed off for their special duties, and they are once more given good advice as to the allotting of their pay to their next-of-kin, &c.

They are now marched back to what they learn to call the "upper deck"—the Great Hall, with its glass roof, glass sides, grand organ, and bandstand. Here the paymaster is sitting at his table. He hands to the recruits thirty shillings each for the week they have been in the service, after which they are dismissed for tea. In the great dining hall each section takes up position at its allotted table, and, as in the morning, every man does justice to the ample fare. "Lyons'" people do the purveying, and an orderly attends to the wants of each table.

The new recruits were not allowed out of bounds that evening, for they had not yet received their uniform. They spent the evening in making friends with one another, in sauntering about the lovely grounds, and in dancing to the music of the Naval Band. "We all had a good time," John smilingly tells us.

At 9 P.M. the bugle blew, or, as the naval men say,

“First post went”; and the men gathered in to their sleeping room, for they were required to retire to rest at 9.30. That night they had no little fun in learning how to climb into their hammocks, and how to roll themselves into their blankets. Some fellows found the feat so difficult that they gave up trying to board the hammock. They lowered the slippery thing to the ground, and lay down upon it there. Those who did manage to get into the hammock couldn’t sleep in it, so they spent that night in talking to their neighbours, who were so near that they could have touched them.

It ought also to be mentioned that each section of sixteen men was under a section leader, who had a list of their names, and who called his roll nightly at ten o’clock. “Lights out” at 10.15.

Reveille bugle at 6 A.M.—that begins the day. The men leave their hammocks, go outside to the coffee boilers, and regale themselves with a cup of coffee and a biscuit. At 6.30 they “fall in” with their battalion, and march round the beautiful grounds for three-quarters of an hour. Back now to the sleeping room, where they are instructed how to rope up the hammock in the approved way and how to properly roll up the blankets. Next to the wash-houses close by—beautiful lavatories with nice basins and towels and soap—after which the lads are in good trim for breakfast at 7.15.

8 A.M.—“Fall in” with battalion under full staff of officers. The new recruits are led off by themselves to a different part of the grounds, where they are trained in infantry movements until noon, when they are marched back to their quarters to “dress for dinner.” They are provided with a good dinner, these naval men of ours—stewed meat, potatoes, cabbage, vegetables, custard; plenty of everything. The band plays sweet music to them all the time of the repast.

At 2.30 the recruits receive their kit at the quarter-

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master's store. Here is the inventory of it:—Kit bag of black canvas (like a pillow-case), pair boots, two flannel shirts, pair pants, blue serge jumper, cap, trousers, lanyard (or white cord to which is attached the jack knife), black silk muffler, tallyband (to put on cap) with the title, "Royal Naval Division," sailor's collar with three white stripes thereon, tie-on bow of ribbon, bootbrushes, toothbrush, brush and comb, blacking, and pair short brown leggings.

From the quartermaster's store the lads retire to their sleeping quarters, where, with great glee and with abundant laughter, they transform themselves, by the help of their new kit, into real sailors. They then pack up their discarded civilian garments in brown paper, which they have purchased at the Y.M.C.A., and they leave the parcel at the post office to be sent home—post free.

Next day work was carried on with increased enthusiasm, and by nightfall the lads were ready to sleep, either in a hammock or out of it. What kind of drill did they practise? Infantry drill, Swedish drill, running round the cycle track, rifle drill, bayonet drill. At the miniature rifle range they had some good sport trying how many moving figures they could knock down in five rounds. With 89 or 90 per cent. marks John Fraser passed all tests.

He listened daily to interesting lectures by the officers on the use of the rifle, on trench warfare, on naval warfare, and on big gun practice, and he thereafter answered the questions put to him regarding the subjects under discussion. He also took his turn at "mounting guard," which was one of the great sights of the Crystal Palace, and which used to attract many civilian visitors to the balcony.

A hundred and twenty men were required to keep guard at night over the railway stations and extensive grounds. At the appointed hour these men, in spick

and span condition, were lined up on a platform as if on the quarter-deck of a ship. There they went through their performance of guard drill, fixed their bayonets, and marched off to their various stations to the music of the band.

Sabbath was an interesting day at the Crystal Palace, for then the men were arranged according to their religious beliefs, and were marched to the various church services. At 9 A.M. the Roman Catholics went off to their chapel, and on coming out they waited to rejoin their comrades of the other persuasions—the Episcopalians from the “Upper Deck,” and the Presbyterians from the Concert Hall. Then took place a grand combined muster of all the six battalions which were quartered in the Crystal Palace—1100 men in each battalion—besides miscellaneous companies of pioneers, cook orderlies, officers’ servants, &c. This great body of men—all looking their very best, so clean and smart—stood respectfully, cap in hand, identification disc exposed, while the Commodore of the Naval Division and other officers made their inspection. Meanwhile the band was discoursing its finest music.

After inspection the men were dismissed for the rest of the day, but they were not permitted to pass out into the world in any straggling, disorderly fashion. They had to arrange themselves into squads, which they termed “liberty boats,” and these crews had to present themselves before their own officer before leaving, so that he might see that all were in good trim. Moreover, these “liberty boats” were not permitted to break their ranks until they were fairly clear of the Palace gates.

In the end of July John Fraser, after being vaccinated, was sent with a draft of about 1000 men to Blandford, the training camp for land service, this being the branch in which he had chosen to serve. On arrival at Blandford Station they were marched,

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in pouring rain, over the Dorset downs to the camp, which consisted of lines of wooden huts—twenty huts in a line, sixty men in a hut. John was quartered in “A” Line. He soon found that he had come to a life very different from that of the Crystal Palace. On the dinner-table there were no white cloths now; a big ashet of stew was placed by an orderly on the end of the bare table, and tin plates were rattled up for supplies. At tea time, too, it was an old enamelled bowl which John had to pass along to be dipped in the bucket of tea—a great change from the gentlemanly ways he had of late been finding so agreeable.

Before retiring for the night the lads enjoyed a stroll over the downs, and they paid a visit to the three Y.M.C.A. huts and the Primitive Methodist hut. Roll call was at 9.30; “Lights out!” at 10 P.M.

Next morning the new men were served with khaki uniform, to transform them from sailors into soldiers. They were told, however, to retain their round cap with its tallyband lettered “Royal Naval Division.” They were instructed also to keep their former naval uniform for digging trenches and such work. The lads were now supplied with the Webb infantry equipment—the two shoulder straps with the haversack, ammunition pouches, water bottle, mess tin, belt, and pack (stocked with shirts and boots and overcoat). With all this material strapped upon their back they were put to drill, and they were compelled to throw more smartness into their movements than they had ever done before. The officers at Blandford shouted more loudly and sternly to the boys than the naval men had done in the Crystal Palace, and altogether John and his comrades felt that life was now becoming stern and serious. Bayonet fighting, rifle drill, musketry firing, and trench digging followed; then came trench drill and night operations. John describes how he and his

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comrades were paraded sometimes at 9 P.M. for these night operations. They were equipped in full marching order, as if in actual battle. One company was sent out to make the attack; another company was detailed to hold the trenches against the enemy. John Fraser and half a dozen comrades were told off as a scouting party, and they crawled and crouched through the darkness, each man 100 yards apart from his fellow, until they got hint of the invading force. Back then ran two of their number to the trenches to inform the officer that the enemy was in sight—that he was approaching on the left.

The officer bestirred himself, ordered his men to stand to arms, and sent out a patrol of fifty brave fellows to circumvent the enemy and to attack the attackers in their rear. There was much suppressed excitement, then a sudden firing of blank cartridges, and a running and shouting and general confusion. John's company were the victors in the battle, and they took no fewer than forty prisoners; the rest of the enemy came in voluntarily and laid down their arms!

On another occasion the lads were marched out eight miles from camp to gain practice in holding a certain village against attack. There they were sent out as guard patrols to all the possible points by which the village might be approached. They stopped all travellers and all vehicles on the roads, and made strict inquiry as to their business and their destination, for counter patrols were moving about the country and were making efforts to steal into the village unawares. Most interesting work the lads found these field operations to be. They enjoyed the route marches, too, with the band.

The week-ends, however, were the best times of all, for then they could go to such places as Bournemouth, and spend their time strolling about amid the

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throng of visitors, admiring the scenery, the gardens, the flowers, listening to the music of the band, and attending concerts and theatres.

In August John, having been selected for a draft to be sent out as reinforcements to the Hood Battalion, received his seven days' draft leave, which he spent at home. On his return to camp he was provided with active service equipment—a waterproof sheet, blankets, a second suit of khaki, a sun helmet, a new rifle, and a new red fibre identification disc stamped "A.B. Fraser, John, 5346, Presbyterian, Hood Battalion, C Coy."

John knew that he was destined for the Dardanelles, and he was glad of it. Although his future lot might prove to be worse than his present life at Blandford, it would at anyrate be a welcome change—so he thought. He was inoculated now (twice) against fevers; then, on 4th September 1915, he sailed from Devonport on the P. & O. liner "Berrima," which carried about 3000 men. Good weather favoured the voyage, so John had no cause to be sick. At Gibraltar the "Berrima" was joined by two destroyers as an escort through the more dangerous waters of the Eastern Mediterranean. At Malta John was delighted to see the Maltese kiddies, some of them not much beyond the stage of learning to walk, disporting themselves in the sea like fishes, calling up to the soldiers on the deck of the transport, "Penny dive, sir," then diving after the coin, which they easily overtook on its journey to the bottom, and brought up in triumph between their teeth!

They had sports, too, at Malta, these naval men, and they competed with one another in boxing and wrestling contests, and in pillow fights. For this last sport a great sail was spread out on deck, fastened up round the edges, and filled with water. A well-greased pole was fixed in position across this water tank, and the

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two combatants, sitting unsteadily on the slippery pole, banged at each other with a pillow until one or other of them went souse into the water! It was grand fun, and it caused much uproarious laughter.

Nearing Mudros Island the vessel was stopped in mid-ocean, and the reinforcements for the Howe and Hawk Battalions were transhipped to another vessel, which had come alongside for the purpose of taking these men straight to Gallipoli. The "Berrima" then continued her voyage, came to anchor at Mudros, and disembarked John Fraser and his comrades for the Hood Battalion. After two days on the bare, unattractive looking island, our draft of about 1000 men was embarked on a big transport, and conveyed under cover of darkness to Cape Helles, Gallipoli. Here the vessel lay off shore all the next day, and when night again came down it steamed alongside the "River Clyde," a transport which had been run aground for the special purpose of acting as a kind of pier, over which troops could make their way from other vessels to the shore. At two o'clock in the morning then, John and his mates formed up their ranks upon the beach.

"We couldn't believe we were on a battlefield," he says; "everything was so still and quiet, and the moon was shining down so peacefully upon the scene."

The men were strictly enjoined to preserve absolute silence, for they were now standing on a narrow strip of beach at the foot of the cliffs, where there was absolutely no shelter for them if the Turks should commence to fire. At three o'clock they were marched up to the summit of the ridge, where in rude-looking pits and dug-outs they lay down and "made the best of it." Three lads crouching under a blanket in each mud-hole, their roof the open sky—that was the experience which awaited our boys at Gallipoli. Their hardships were not to be limited to mere discomforts, for the rifle shots soon rang out upon the air, and the

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batteries of artillery seemed to rend the very mountain with their thunderous shocks. It was the first time John Fraser had heard a gun fire. As the French battery was only 200 yards distant, he felt that now at last he was fairly at the war.

Tired though these lads were in their mud-hole, they could not sleep that night, and it was no wonder. When morning came, a parade was held outside the dugouts, and the men were informed that their battalion was at present in the front line, a few miles farther forward, and that it would not come down for another three days. Their equipment was inspected, to make sure that everything was complete and in proper order, and the lads were then divided into sections corresponding to the twelve or fourteen sections of the battalion. They were told to fill up the time of waiting as best they could, but never to assemble in a crowd, for the position was under the Turkish fire, and disaster might befall them at any moment. So the lads strolled about the hill in groups of twos and threes. They learned from men of other regiments who were stationed there how dismal was the life they had been living in Gallipoli, with nothing to cheer their hearts, no excitement, be it even of battle, to set the blood a-pulsing in their veins—nothing but unending hardship and grim endurance. The Turks were masters of the situation, but being short of ammunition, they were not able to make the place untenable for the British troops. Our boys would have been brave enough to make the attempt to dispossess the Turks, but human life was too valuable for us to spend on such an enterprise.

During these days of waiting, John was busied in digging mule trenches. These were zig-zag sunken roads leading down to the shore for the protection of the mules which brought up the rations and stores under cover of the night.

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When the battalion came down from the line for a seven days' rest, the new recruits heard stories from them which, as John says, "made their hair stand on end." The seven days' rest were seven days' digging at trenches and dug-outs. Thereafter John and his comrades accompanied the battalion "into the line."

Here, again, there was no battle fever in the air, only continuous burrowing of more trenches and saps and underground mines. Seven days in the line, seven days out—so the days and weeks and months went past. Water—did the boys have water, at least for refreshing drink? Only one pint per man per day, carried up in petrol tins from a spring away down at Krithia; only one pint to make the tea and wash the face and shave the beard!

September, October, November, December — John Fraser became dismal and miserable like the other fellows. He says he could not understand this dreary clinging to a position which could not be improved. Only once was the alarm sounded to "stand to." He thought the battle was upon them, but the Turks did not appear, and all became quiet once more. The artillery of the enemy he could not see, because it was posted behind the great hill Achi Baba, but he lived in continual danger from the shells which the guns threw over the hill. The Turkish snipers, however, were more feared by him than the artillery. One cold day there fell rain—rain such as John had never seen before, sheets of falling water which flooded and obliterated much of the trenching and burrowing at which the boys had worked so hard and long. And they had to crouch in these cold, wet holes, and try with a waterproof sheet to keep out the floods of heaven! As it happened to be John's turn to go forward to the line, he had to wade through bits of trenches three feet deep of mud and water, and then lie down to rest on a muddy ledge with all his load

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strapped upon his back. Think of this! ye who lived in warmth and comfort all through those dreadful years of war!

On 12th November Lord Kitchener himself went out to Gallipoli to survey the scene of conflict. John was then in the dug-outs, and he is now glad to recall that he saw at a distance the great General walking up the line. John learned afterwards that Lord Kitchener came to the decision that the Turkish position could not be taken by a frontal attack without too great a sacrifice of life.

From the top of their hill John and his comrades used to look down at the ships in the Dardanelles—at the “Aquitania” and “Mauretania,” at the “Queen Elizabeth,” and at the hospital ship lying in the bay. Some nights the boys thought almost enviously of the lads who had been carried on board the hospital ship. John says it was a lovely sight—the vessel lit up so brightly, with its great red cross shining over the dark waters to claim exemption from the Turkish fire. He wished he was on board the vessel, going away from this dreadful place—going away home!

There was much sickness in the camp during November and December of that year, and men were being sent to hospital with enteric fever and dysentery at the rate of 1000 per day, till it became a difficult matter to keep the regiments up to strength. Dysentery seized our boy at last. He “felt queer,” he says, when he went up to the trenches one morning, and his petty officer saw that the lad was ill. “You’re looking very bad,” said the officer; “go down and see the doctor.” John repaired to the doctor’s dug-out, two or three trenches back, and the result was that, with a temperature of 104·2°, he was sent down to the big hospital marquee on the beach. Next day he was taken on board ship, and was conveyed—first to Alexandria, where he was nursed for a few weeks; then to Mudros,

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where he was transhipped to that floating palace, the "Mauretania"—bound for England!

A restful and delightful voyage he had now, surrounded with every kindness and comfort. After he recovered a little the doctor encouraged him to go up on deck, where he sat in a deck chair and enjoyed the gentle breeze and the radiance of the sea and sky. At Southampton he was taken to Haslar Naval Hospital, near Gosport, where he remained for about a month. He was then instructed to report himself at his own headquarters at Blandford.

At Blandford railway station the convalescents were welcomed by the naval padre with a cup of tea. They were then taken up to camp in motor ambulances, they were given new khaki clothing, and they were quartered in their huts as of old. Next morning the colonel of John's battalion came to speak some kind words to the twenty-four convalescents from Gallipoli. "He was a fine old gentleman," John says. "He himself had been sent home wounded some time before, and so he was much interested to hear how the men were getting along in Gallipoli. He told us that we were to have twenty-eight days' leave. He hoped we would have a good time at home, and that we would be quite recovered when our time was up."

The twenty-eight days passed all too quickly, and John was back again at Blandford. He was put into a miscellaneous battalion of R.F.D. (returned from division) men to do easy odd jobs about the camp, for the rule was that these returned men must stay for six months in England before being again sent east. The Medical Board inspected the men, passed some of them as fit for service, and set aside others (among whom was our lad) for another six months of easy duty. John considered himself lucky in being placed on the range staff, and in being sent to the musketry school to act as a marker for the targets.

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In due time the Medical Board again examined John, and again certified him as unfit for service abroad. He was sent now to assist in the cook-house, where he thought he was sure of an easy six months; but another doctor appeared on the scene and passed him and forty other men for overseas—this time for France, where the Naval Division was holding its share of the battle line. John was put through a four months' course of gas drill, varied only with some digging and some route marches; then on 16th November 1917 he was shipped from Folkestone to Boulogne with a mixed lot of reinforcements. Next day he was carried by train to Calais, where he reported at the divisional wing of the Naval Division. Three days he was employed on working parties, then he was given his active service kit—a waterproof sheet, a gas helmet, a leather jerkin, but no rifle. He now learned that he was to be attached to the Divisional Employment Company. He was first sent to Etaples, where he was quartered for three days; then he was sent to the Divisional Reinforcement Camp at Rebempre for a further course of gas drill (including tests with the real mustard gas), after which he was put upon the train to make his way to his division. He disentrained at Bapaume, and there in the heaps of ruined buildings he saw startling evidence of the work of war. At Beaulincourt he found his Divisional Employment Company. Now his hands were filled with interesting and useful work in the service of his division, which at that time was moving up the line towards Cambrai.

From January to March 1918 John Fraser was attached to the Hood Battalion as one of the men in the service of the "Hood Officer." This official, John explains to us, was at that time acting as "Town Major," or officer in charge of the whole of the area in which the division was quartered. His area was

Havrincourt Wood, in front of Cambrai, where the four battalions of the Naval Division were then holding that part of our battle line—two battalions in the line and two out for rest, turn about. The wood had recently been taken from the Germans, so it was honeycombed with roomy and comfortable dug-outs. John's duty was to go round the dug-outs and huts to make sure that everything was in good order for the men returning from the line. He had also to receive the reports from the officers as to the strength and position of the various regiments, and convey these reports to the town major, as that gentleman's department served the purpose of a kind of general information bureau.

Batteries of artillery were posted all over Havrincourt Wood, their observation balloons floating in the sky overhead. Many a thrilling duel has our lad witnessed round these balloons as he went his daily rounds through the wood. He often looked up to see the German aeroplanes come swiftly flying out of a cloud; they would make a sudden swoop at the balloon, and then our balloonist must needs jump out of his basket, and, hanging to his parachute, drop to earth!

At night the sound of the guns was terrific, and the whole district was illumined with the flame of the artillery barrages. This firing came to a height on 21st March, when an enormous quantity of gas was sent over by the Germans. "Nearly a whole battalion," John says, "was caught in the gas. We learned this because we were sent round the hospitals to receive the reports from the R.A.M.C. men."

Suddenly the alarm was raised that the Germans had broken through on the left of Cambrai, and all the naval men were rushed up to the line in hot haste. The town major's men were ordered to stand by in a dug-out, and there to make the best of things for the night. Next morning the bombing officer found himself compelled to retire from the wood, leaving the

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town major as the responsible man in charge of the bomb and ammunition dumps. "That day," says John, "we knew that the Germans had actually broken through, and that our boys were falling back. It was an exciting time, for the German shells were bursting all over the wood. Our men cleared out—artillery, transports, and all—and the town major and his four assistants ordered us to leave the dumps to their fate, and to seek our own safety. We were no longer able to go down the wood track, for the Germans were shelling it, so we crossed a field and went by another road. The uproar of the shelling was terrific, and I do not know why so few of us were killed. I wasn't frightened; I only knew that I must try to get out of it."

John Fraser and his mates, over one hundred of them, made their way to Yttres, some six or seven kilos in the rear, where they found the Y.M.C.A. huts in a state of wreckage, and the soldiers helping themselves to the foodstuffs. Back farther they hurried, by roads jammed with frenzied traffic—transports, artillery, and peasantry—back to Leboeuf, where they were ordered to stop for the night. In the morning they were paraded in readiness for a move, and while they stood waiting orders one of their own headquarters officers came past, and shouted—"Clear out of this place at once—every man for himself—the Germans are close upon us. Carry as little as possible; dump all you can't carry. Make for Albert—twenty kilos!"

So these naval men broke their ranks and scattered in different directions. John Fraser and other three lads kept together, and set out for Albert. All the countryside was in a state of alarm and confusion. The roads were packed solid for miles upon miles with transports and guns and horses and mules and lorries and ambulance waggons and peasants' carts and barrows. Shells were falling all around, but, by good

fortune, none of these shells seemed to be landing on the road. The only element of steadiness and composure in the scene was the long line of our supports—the boys in khaki, who were taking their positions along the roadside as quietly as if they were out for a day of sham field manoeuvres. The town of Albert was in a state of alarm, for the German aeroplanes had been there the preceding night, and had wrought much damage with their bombs. Our four fugitives, therefore, continued their journey to Martinsat. Here they found refuge in the billets of a battery of artillery, but at midnight rose the cry of alarm—"The Germans are already in Albert, only four miles off! Martinsat must be vacated instantly!" So the guns and the waggons and the horses and the mules and the throngs of people who had fled from Albert had all again to take to the road. John Fraser and his fellows accompanied the artillery to another village on the right of Albert, and they had just taken shelter in a fine chateau, when a staff officer rode up with the intelligence that the Germans were at hand! They might be expected at any moment! All gear must instantly be dumped, and men must flee if they would save their lives! Homeless fugitives now of a surety, our lads made off once more, and for three days they wandered hither and thither, sleeping at night where they could find a refuge, eating what food they could secure in regimental billets or stores. Nobody knew what terrible event had happened! Nobody knew what would happen next!

Somehow the lads found their way to Pushevillers, the headquarters of their own division. Here they were in safety. For the next few months John was occupied in bringing forward and looking after the stores of rations, ammunition, &c., at Bernville, at Pushevillers, and at Ranchevalle.

In August 1918 the Naval Division was once more

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in the line of battle on the Somme, and this time, and finally, they forced the German army to retreat before them. From that time until the end of the war, our lad was in the closest attendance on the victorious troops. But he does not care to speak of these days, for he has seen more than most men of the abominable works of war—of the unspeakable horrors of the modern battlefield.

To-day, as John Fraser sings and whistles to the measure of his printing press, his heart is filled with abounding thankfulness that he—after all the hardships and dangers through which he has passed, after all the dreadful sights his eyes have witnessed, after the loss of so many of his gallant mates at the Dardanelles and at the Somme, after the death of his own brother among the Black Watch at Ypres—that he, sound in wind and limb, has been spared to come home once more, to be the stay and comfort of his father's home.

ROBERT V. HARRIS

(AGED 18),

PRIVATE (15625), 3RD BATTALION GORDON HIGHLANDERS.

ROBERT HARRIS entered our employment as an assistant to the sack printers on 15th February 1916, and he worked with us for some months after the conclusion of the war.

We asked Robert what he thought about enlisting when the war broke out. "Oh," he replied, "I wanted to go away at once to get a change and to see the world; and besides, it was my duty to go." Robert's youth, however, being against him, he was obliged to see his two best comrades go off to the war without him.

In July 1915 he resolved to make an attempt to enter the army, although he was still under the age required. Presenting himself at the Nethergate Recruiting Office, he was met by the sergeant at the door with the question—"Well, my man, what would you like to get into?"

"The Gordons," said Robert; "I know a few lads in them."

"Come ben here," said the sergeant, setting the boy up against the wall, which was marked off in feet and inches. Alas! "Bobbie's" head did not reach to the stature required, and when the sergeant went on to measure his breadth of chest it also was found wanting.

"I doot, my man," said the sergeant, "you'll no' manage. You'll have to come back some other time."

Our boy went home disappointed, to wait till he would grow older and taller and stouter. These were



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the days when the pipers used to play on the High Street to stimulate the martial spirit amongst the young men. Robert Harris often stood listening to the bagpipes and dreaming of the glories and adventures of a military life. One evening, when the youths were thronging into the recruiting office at High Street, he pushed himself in also, hoping in some way to be accepted along with the others. But he failed again. "It's no use, my man," said the sergeant who measured him; "you'll have to grow a bit bigger yet"—and Robert again withdrew.

In course of time the Derby scheme came into operation, and as Robert had now attained the required age the door of the service was open to him. He remembers going in October 1916 to the Albert Hall, where, after passing the doctor as an A1 man, he was shown a list of regiments (mostly kilted) from which to make his choice. He chose the Gordons as his favourites. The sergeant who showed him the list asked—"What about your own lot? Why not take the Black Watch?"

"No," replied the boy; "it's just my fancy to take the Gordons."

"Oh, very well," said the sergeant; "I would have done the same myself."

After a few days Robert received his summons to present himself at the Nethergate Recruiting Office on a certain day at 10 A.M. He obeyed, received his railway warrant for Aberdeen, and left by the forenoon train, with instructions to report himself at Castlehill Barracks.

The sergeant of the guard was sitting in his guard-room when Robert made his appearance with seven other recruits. "Follow me," said the sergeant, "I'll show you your quarters." Leading them to a great room containing about forty beds, he told the lads to make themselves comfortable there till tea time."

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The bugle announced tea at 4 P.M. An old soldier took the new recruits to the dining hall, a private at the door gave each of them a mug and a plate, another private filled their mugs from the tea-urn, and an orderly handed each of them two slices of bread. They took their seats at the long table, and when the butter and syrup followed them they had to look sharp, Robert says, or they had to go without.

After tea the lads returned to their sleeping room, where a sergeant showed them how to make their beds properly. "Now," said he, "You'll get out at six o'clock, but you'll have to be back here at 9.30." Robert left the barracks at six o'clock, alone. He had made no friends yet, and he was feeling so far from home now that he didn't want any new friends. He wandered down Union Street to a post office, bought a picture post card and a stamp, and wrote a comforting message to his mother—"that he had arrived all right, that he was quite well, and that he was beginning to get settled down." What better could any boy have done?

The rest of the evening Robert spent at the Queen's Cinema. At nine o'clock he was back in his bedroom. The old soldier, who was in charge of the new recruits, interested them with a rifle, showed them how to take it down and how to put it up. "Now," said he, "you'll better hurry up and get to bed. 'First post' is at 9.30, 'Last post' at ten, 'Lights out' at 10.15."

Our boy didn't sleep well that first night, everything was so strange around him. He had begun to see that hereafter he must learn to live without the support and sympathy of his old home. Near his bed, too, there was a broken window, through which the cold night wind blew across his face and wakened him every now and then.

Next morning reveille sounded at seven o'clock.

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Within half an hour Robert was required to dress and wash, and make up his bed. Breakfast followed, with a kipper to give it a relish. Now he had to answer the sergeant's questions, such as—

"You, Harris?"

"Yes, sir."

"What religion are you?"

"Church of England."

"Who's your next-of-kin?"

"My mother."

"What's her maiden name?"

"Valentine."

The sergeant, after taking note of the answers, led the recruits to the stores for their uniform.

Castlehill Barracks at that time was occupied by men who were being kept on light duty, as they had just come out of hospital after having served in France. Our eight recruits, therefore, had to be transferred to the main depot—King Street Barracks.

After tea, they were ordered to muster on the parade ground. They knew nothing about drill, but in some sort of way they were made to "Fall in" and to "Right turn" and to "Quick march" out upon the public street to their new barracks. Robert says that he did his best to show a good style to the people of Aberdeen, as was expected of him, but his boots were some sizes too big for his feet, and he felt a dismal lack of self-confidence as he marched along.

At King Street Barracks a new set of experiences was awaiting our lad. To begin with, the regimental sergeant-major, after inspecting the new recruits, ordered his bugler to sound for the orderly sergeants of the four companies of the battalion—A, B, C, and D, and to each of these sergeants he handed over two of the recruits. Robert Harris was allotted to B company, and he was taken to the orderly sergeant's bunk, where again all his particulars were written down. Thereafter

he received the remainder of his equipment—belt, shoulder straps, gas helmet, water bottle, rifle, bayonet and scabbard, cartridge pouches, and pack for holding all his gear.

The orderly corporal, seeing that Robert was somewhat dazed with such a number of new possessions, showed him how to pack them up. "Do you think you could do that yourself?" he asked. The boy was very doubtful of being able to pack all his belongings into so small a compass, so the corporal was good enough to open the pack, take out the things, and fix them up again in ship-shape style. "Now," said he, "let it stay up in the meantime, and when you do open it, take special notice how the things have been lying. And see that you look well after all your things," he added, "or some of them will be sure to disappear."

One important item of his uniform Robert had not yet got—the kilt. This he received that evening at the tailor's shop. He took it "home" in all excitement. He tried it on. He thought it was too high, then he thought it was too low. He wondered if people would look at it, he wondered what people would think, what people would say! Then he hung it up so that the pleats would dispose themselves nicely, and again he assumed his trousers for the ordinary workaday life of the barracks.

Robert felt more at home this second night than he felt the night before. For one reason he was becoming somewhat accustomed to the new ways of his life; secondly, he was fairly tired out with all his experiences; and, lastly, he had struck up a close friendship with Bert Duncan, the youth who was now reclining by his side. Ere they fell asleep, these two lads had many things to say to one another about their friends and homes and former ways of life, and about the future that lay unseen before them.

Reveille sounded at 6.30; then came the usual army

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shout by the sergeant—"Show a leg, boys." Our two lads jumped up, pulled on their clothes, and flew downstairs to the water troughs. At the next call of the bugle, at 6.45, the company (some sixty or eighty men) were numbered off in two lines, and rifles were inspected. The order was then given to "Pile arms," and Robert and Bert were shown how three rifles could be made to stand upright by means of the swivel and hook at the end of each barrel. Next followed the orders—"Stand clear" (and they stood back from the rifles), "Left turn," "Right turn," "Number off," "Form fours," "Form two deep," "Right turn," "By the left—Quick march." "Left turn" finally brought them down to King Street, where they were sent off at the "Double" for a quarter of an hour, after which "Quick march" brought them back to the barracks to take up their rifles and retire to their room.

The boys greatly relished their breakfast after this morning's work. They were already beginning to taste some of the joys of an active open-air life.

At 9.30, the order being given to "Parade with full equipment," Robert buckled on his harness. His burden at first was light and easy, and he could not but feel a touch of pride as he took his place amid the great battalion, his soul thrilling with the music of the band. The regimental sergeant-major directed some drill movements, after which the battalion marched to the links, piled arms, and proceeded to drill. Our recruits now got an idea of what is meant by "physical training." They were but poor, limp, feeble creatures when at noon they trailed home their weary bodies and their heavy packs.

On succeeding days the forenoons were always spent on the links at rifle drill, bayonet fighting, physical training, and gas tests. We asked Robert about the gas tests. He told us that a gas mask is something

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like a bag, which covers the whole of the head and neck. It is provided with two great glasses for seeing through, and it is fitted with a short rubber tube, which must be held firmly between the lips of the wearer. Purified air is inhaled by the nostrils, the exhaled air going out through the rubber tube (which allows air to pass out but not to enter). "The whole thing has an awful smell," says Robert, "and it is always damp."

Our lads were introduced to the use of the gas mask by a special instructor, who showed them how to wear the mask, and how most quickly to put it on. "Never get excited," he said; "that's the slowest way." After showing them two or three times how to put it on, he told them to try it for themselves. Then he gave them six seconds to put on the mask, standing the while with watch in hand to see how they succeeded. A few trials of this, and he set the lads, shrouded in their masks, to some marching exercise—"Left, Right, Left, Right," and so on; then he called "Double," and set them off at the run. Some of the boys quickly lost their breath, and they pulled off their masks to get air, only to receive a prompt rebuke from the instructor. "If the gas had been coming over from the enemy what would you have done?" he asked. One of the offenders replied, "Although the gas had been coming over I would have taken off the mask!" Our boy says he managed to hold out, although he felt as if he would soon have been choked.

Thereafter the lads were led to the gas chamber—a dark cave or tunnel in the side of a hill—for a practical test with the gas itself. With helmets carefully adjusted they followed their instructor through the door of the cave, through a thick curtain into the chamber. Here the instructor turned on the gas. He himself could venture to speak to his pupils, but

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he had warned them not to reply to him save by signs. Five minutes of the gas, and then out again into the sunlight. Their bonnie brass buttons were black now, and would require to be repolished when they went home; wristlet watches also were sadly tarnished by the gas.

Helmets were now rolled up and placed in their satchels, and glengarries were donned for bayonet fighting. Drill finished for the forenoon at 12.30, when the battalion was played back to barracks for dinner. At 1.40 the men were paraded again, with same full equipment, and marched back to the links for rifle drill till four, when duty finished for the day.

For two and a half months Robert was trained in this daily routine of drill. He was liking his army life better now, and he was enjoying the open-air physical training, which was making him so firm and strong.

The finishing touch was given to Robert's training by sending him to "fire his course"—that is, to attend for a week at the Seaton Arms Rifle Butts to practise firing at stationary and at moving targets.

He enjoyed a happy week at home in December, and when he returned to barracks one other item of training was added to his repertoire—live bomb throwing. Then he was ready for his summons to leave for overseas. At last he read his name on the orders, which were posted up every morning on the dining-hall door and on the guardroom door, and he knew that he was now to be sent to France.

About the end of February 1917, Robert left Aberdeen. He remembers that the pipe band on the station platform played off his draft with the tune, "Happy we've been a' thegither." At Dundee the train stopped for only a few minutes, but at Edinburgh it waited for two hours, and a crowd gathered at the carriage windows to hand to the lads gifts of chocolate, lemonade, &c., to shake hands with them,

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and to wish them a speedy return. Robert will never forget a little scene which took place on the platform just before him. An old man with his daughter had come down to the train to say farewell to his son, who was in the draft. The pathos of the parting was so touching that all the lads in the carriage were made sore at heart. At Newcastle two of the draft "disappeared," leaving their kits behind them; but at least one of these lads must have been recaptured, for Robert saw him afterwards in France.

London at midnight; Folkestone next morning at 6.30 to await the sailing of the transport. To each man as he steps on board is handed a lifebelt, with the order to wear it until the boat reaches the other side. The crossing to Boulogne is made in safety, and now Robert is on the magic soil of France, and a crowd of French people are gazing curiously at his kilt as the men line up on the pier. A short railway journey to Etaples, and his draft is added to the huge army camp established for the final training of the men preparatory to their taking up positions at the front. From a long wooden store Robert receives a steel helmet, a waterproof sheet, and a rifle (his former rifle having been left "at home"). After tea he is free for the evening. He must stay, indeed, within the wide bounds of the parade grounds, but there is no temptation to go farther, for he is surrounded with all kinds of comforts and recreations and kindly services — Church Army Huts, Y.M.C.A. Huts, Catholic Huts, Salvation Army Huts, Wesleyan Huts, with writing pads and books and concerts and pictures galore.

This evening Robert lays himself down to rest in a tent with fifteen other lads. It is a tight squeeze, and there is water dripping from several holes in the leaky roof, but being hardy now he can sleep in almost any discomfort.

Next morning Robert was paraded for the doctor's

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inspection, which consisted in asking him if he was "feeling fit." The sergeant thereafter told Robert to beware of losing his cap badge, or of saying he had lost it, otherwise he might find himself for seven days behind barbed wire, which means in a tent wired off as a guard-room. In those days, as high prices were being offered for cap badges, any man who said he had lost his badge gave rise to the suspicion that he had sold it.

The remainder of that day was free, but next morning Robert commenced his ten days' training in the "Bull Ring"—a training so strenuous that it was said almost to kill the men, and to drive them to the verge of rebellion. Firing, bomb-throwing, bayonet fighting, physical jerks, gas tests, big jumps across imaginary trenches—all these were done in one day, a row of motor ambulances being kept standing in readiness to carry off to hospital the casualties of this rigorous training.

On one of these ten days Robert was free from parade, in order that when night came he might take his place in the trenches and hold them against an imaginary enemy. One-half of his platoon huddled together in a dug-out; of the other half of the platoon some sat on the fire-step, while others kept a sharp look-out over the parapet. Snow fell heavily all through the night, blank shots rang out from time to time, and the lads were introduced to some of the experiences which awaited them in actual warfare. At 5 A.M. the relieving party appeared, and Robert and his fellows retired to camp.

On the last day of his training in the "Bull Ring" Robert received five francs in French money, being the first pay he had got since landing in France. He thinks he was lucky in getting that money, for, as there was no more of it that day, a lot of fellows coming behind him had to go without. Robert saw a

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good deal of gambling among the troops at Etaples. There was only one gambling game allowed by the authorities—namely, “House”—because in that game not one man only, but several, have a chance of winning. The game favoured by the men, however, was “Crown and Anchor,” and for it they asked no permission!

In the spring of 1917 the men of Robert's draft were supplied with 120 rounds of live ammunition and were entrained for Bouzeaucourt, where they were to join the 2nd Battalion of Gordon Highlanders. This battalion had just come out of the trenches for a six weeks' rest after one of the severest winters of the war, and the troops were now living in huts at Bouzeaucourt in comparative comfort. On the arrival of the draft of 250 men the regimental sergeant-major called together his four orderly sergeants, A, B, C, and D, and amongst them he divided up the new draft, Robert being sent to A Coy., 3rd platoon.

A grand time Robert had among the Gordons at Bouzeaucourt. Although the camp was near the battle-front, there was no fighting in that sector at that time—simply a routine of holding the line in turn with other regiments. After two hours each morning of rifle drill and physical exercises, the men were free to spend the day as they pleased. They had some sport in going out with their rifles to shoot rabbits, but the best sport of all was football, and football they played to their heart's content.

Now comes a rather interesting chapter in Robert's reminiscences. “They sent me,” he says, “along with four others, to a sniping school at Vadencourt, a village so small that in it there were no shops, but only a house where one could buy a loaf of bread. On our arrival a sergeant-major took us in charge, gave us some details of the work before us, and showed us the barn where we were to sleep in the company of ten

lads who had arrived before us. This barn was attached to a grand chateau, which stood in a beautiful park, with trees and a rippling stream and plenty of rabbits. Apple trees there were, too, and of these we ate the fruit; whether the trees were wild or not we never asked.

“After tea, four of us had a walk into the country as far as the village of Warloy, where there were a few shops and a café. The French people always treated us kindly, so we managed to buy what we wanted, though we knew nothing of the language.

“From our evening stroll we returned to the barn to sleep. The sergeants were not strict with us as to hours. There was no bugle call; they simply saw that we had all come home, and that lights were duly extinguished.

“We new fellows didn’t sleep until very late, for the rats came in when the candles went out, and they squealed and raced over the blankets and frolicked about the floor like—*dogs!* We, in time, however, became accustomed to these nocturnal visitors, and we ceased to trouble ourselves about them.

“Next day we commenced our new duties. The sniping school was not exactly intended to train us to snipe at an enemy; its purpose was rather to train a class of officers to detect a hidden sniper on the field of battle. Our function was to personate the enemy snipers in the grass. This first morning the sniping instructors put over my head and shoulders a big screen like a net, which was sewn all over with tufts of the same grass as the grass in the park. I was then sent to a certain position, and was instructed to lie down in such a way that I could aim and fire a rifle. Three of the other lads were disguised in the same manner, and were sent to their positions—one behind a tussock of grass, one behind a stone, and one behind a bush—the nearest of all only 200 yards from the

instructor. The class was then brought to the edge of the park to look for us through their binoculars. The instructor gave them hints as to where each sniper was posted—how many yards distant and whether to right or left. He allowed the class seven minutes to detect the sniper. If they failed, he blew his whistle, when the sniper rose to his knee in the aiming position, and remained so until the next blast of the whistle, when he dropped flat on the ground. Four minutes being then allowed to us, we endeavoured to wriggle unseen through the grass to a new position. The class again tried to locate the snipers; if they failed, the instructor whistled and we stood up and showed ourselves. We often heard the instructor impress upon his class the extreme difficulty of detecting a sniper when he was well hidden in the grass, or when he was masked with the same colour as the ground.

“The next exercise was carried out in this way:—We boys were dressed in German helmets and tunics, and were taken to the wood on the ridge overlooking the park. The sergeant set us in certain positions, and blew his whistle when all was ready. Meantime the class down below had been listening to a lecture by the other instructor, who now blew his whistle in reply, and began to give his men hints as to where to look for us. I was lying behind a bush, but in such a way that a keen eye might see me. At the next blast of the whistle I had to load my rifle. At another blast I had to raise myself on one knee and fire five blank shots; then, after waiting six seconds, I had to stand upright and fire another shot. That finished my exercise. The other boys in their turn went through the same performance, and the class members down below were awarded marks according to their smartness in discovering us.”

Such was the routine of the sniping school, varied from day to day by a great number of interesting experiments. The class members, after two or three

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weeks of this training, returned to their different units, and a fresh class came rolling down in motor cars to the park at Vadencourt.

All summer Robert Harris played his part in the sniping school. In November he received his well-earned leave, with £4 as part of his credit, besides £2 which would be waiting him at the Union Jack Club, London. At Waterloo Station he was met by a crowd of people offering their help to guide him wherever he wished to go—old men and boy scouts and girl guides. One of the girl guides was first in securing as her prize Robert and his three chums. "Where are you going, Jock?" she asked. "Dundee," said Robert; "but can you tell me first, where is the Union Jack Club?" "Yes, Jock, just follow me and I'll show you." She didn't speak any more, this girl guide, for she was intent upon her duty, but she led them upstairs and across the road, and pointed to a building—"Over there, Jock," she said; "go right in, and you'll see the notice above a door on the right hand side"—then away she flew to her post on the station platform. Robert Harris found his Club, went up to the pay table, and received £2 as a part of his credit, but without any explanation as to how the money came to be there. He turned now to the old man who was sitting by the door with a lot of big railway time-table books by his side, and from him Robert learned when his train would start for Dundee. This same old man also directed our boys to the dining-hall, where food was supplied to them, whatsoever they asked, and nothing to pay—because they were in the service! From the Club now to the busy streets—to the bootblacks with their "Cherry Blossom" and their "Nugget" blackings. Our lads had their puttees scraped clear of the French mud that was still adhering to them, and they had their boots polished bright and beautiful. They gave a shilling a-piece to the poor fellow without legs who

did the job for them, and they all felt very, very happy!

They went then to the big Y.M.C.A. Hut, opposite King's Cross Railway Station, where they played a game of billiards, and partook of tea with ham and egg and bread and cakes—all for a shilling! They felt their hearts expand and soften in the home-like atmosphere of the place, where the lady in charge spoke so frankly and kindly to her customers—"It was the first kind word we had heard since leaving home," says Robert, with a tremor in his voice.

Robert's twelve days at home went past like twelve minutes, when off again he had to set for France. To London first, to the Y.M.C.A. Hut, of course, with its atmosphere of kindness and goodness; then to Southampton, and across the Channel on a stormy, rainy night, with his lifebelt beneath his head for a pillow. Back to the sniping school for some weeks—then Robert received notice to join his battalion, which was under orders to leave for Italy.

He reached his unit by the help of a three hours' ride on a motor lorry, and entrained with the others for the long journey. The train passed through Le Havre, where the pipe band marched to and fro on the station platform, giving the French people a taste of the real Scottish Highland music, to which the French responded with shouts of "Bravo!" "Vive l'Angleterre!" Some days later the train reached Monte Carlo, where the grateful crowds thronged round the carriages with gifts of chocolate and oranges and flowers.

Seven days in all lasted this journey—twenty-nine men packed in each cow-truck. The lads managed to sit down, indeed, but they did not have room to lie, so when the train made a halt at any station they used to go out for a run along the platform. Some fellows at first rode on the roof of the truck, although they had been warned not to do so. The result of this fool-

hardy feat was that one of them lost his life. Other lads persisted in riding with their legs dangling out from the side of the truck until two of them were killed, when the men at last resigned themselves to keep within the safety of the truck.

At the crossing of the Italian frontier Robert was interested to notice that there were two clocks in the railway station, one showing on its face nine o'clock French time, while the hands of the other pointed to ten o'clock Italian time. On the bridge, too, a French soldier walked sentry at one end, while an Italian soldier marched backwards and forwards at the other end. Of the shops in the station, one half had their signboards in French, the other half in Italian. French money had now to be changed for Italian.

What kind of a reception did the Gordons receive from the Italians, who had never before seen a kilted regiment? Enthusiastic! Rapturous! It was the welcome of a nation to their deliverers—to their saviours from impending destruction. The pipe band played glad music on the platform, and the kilties danced the Highland fling and shouted "Hooch!" The Italian people pushed fruits and cakes and coffee into the carriages, and nothing at all to be paid for them. "Evviva Inghilterra!" "Evviva Inghilterra!" they shouted all round. It was the same at every station the Gordons touched. The like was never seen before!

And what about the country and the scenery? To Robert Harris the mountains were the outstanding feature; there were so many of them, all so lofty and so steep, with a shining crown of snow upon their summits. In the beginning of 1918 the men were moved forward in big W.D.'s (War Department motor lorries) nearer to the line of battle, nearer to Mount Pau, nearer to the snow. Four hours they rode in the lorries (twenty-five men standing erect, closely packed,

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in each lorry), then they dismounted, and finished the climb on foot. The road was very steep, and the men were exhausted by the time they reached their destination on the plateau. It was a kind of a reserve camp to which they had been brought. The Italians had a number of wooden huts for their own use, but our Gordons were required to peg out their bivouacs upon the open heath, and shelter themselves as best they could.

For the next month or so Robert and his battalion were busied with the Royal Engineers at roadmaking and other constructive work. The men used to go out at 8.30 in the morning, with a "piece" in their pocket, and they toiled without a halt until three o'clock in the afternoon. Robert was sent to the shell dump to assist in receiving the shells from the teleferic railway which was bringing them up the hill on a travelling wire. Ten men worked at the receiving station of each of the four railways. They took the shells out of the cage which was bringing them up on the wire, and they carried the shells to the motors which were in waiting to convey them to the batteries or to the stores. No light work it was to handle this ceaseless stream of eighteen pounders, 5.9's, and gas shells. Robert thinks now that the squad of men who labour on a shell dump is the hardest working party of all. All this time, remember, the air was bitterly cold, and the snow lay deep upon the ground. The Italians used to gaze in amazement at the men who worked in kilts. "We felt it very cold," says Robert, "but we never said to them that we felt it."

The only item of comfort about the place was the Y.M.C.A. marquee, to which the men resorted for tea and chocolate and music and convenience for writing letters. The Austrians, however, used frequently to shell the marquee. Robert laughs even yet when he describes how the crowd of soldiers (and the attendant

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too) used to rush pell-mell for shelter beneath the tables when the shrapnel began to pepper the tent. On Sabbath evenings, from 6.30 to 7.30, church service was held in the marquee. Robert and his comrades used to attend it with pleasure.

In course of time orders came for the battalion to move into the trenches, so one Friday evening, at eleven o'clock, in pouring rain, they went forward to relieve the Italians. Up till now things had been tolerably quiet in this sector, but no sooner were the Gordons in their positions than the artillery began to thunder from before and behind. The Austrians at this time were using 17-inch armour piercers. Robert says he used to listen with awe to the great shell as it rushed through the air like the "Flying Scotchman."

Night and day, for seven days, the artillery bombardment continued, with surprisingly few casualties. A bombing raid was then projected for the capturing of prisoners and the obtaining of information. Thirty men volunteered for this dangerous bit of work—"volunteered," says Robert grimly, "because you had to go!"

On a cold, dry night of pitch black darkness see our little company make ready for their daring foray. From each man's shoulder hangs his rifle, from each man's neck depends his bomb-pouch—four deadly missiles in one man's pouch; in another's, eight. At 11.30 the men, four paces apart, leave the shelter of the trench. At the same moment, with a sudden crash, our artillery thunders upon the front line of the enemy in order to keep him down. Three or four minutes only—then the barrage of fire is suddenly raised to reach his second line—to allow our bombers to get forward, and to drive back the enemy's reserves. But the Austrians are not asleep this fateful night, their S.O.S. signal lights redden the very air, their artillery bursts into thunderous response, their shrapnel sweeps the earth of

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No Man's Land. Will any of our volunteers ever come back out of such an inferno of fire and flame? Four lads did return in safety, bringing a couple of prisoners with them. Some others were assisted back to safety when the artillery quietened down a little, and when the stretcher-bearers could venture out. "We didn't make another bombing raid," says Robert, "for it turned out to be too expensive!"

Robert's battalion held the line for fully a month—a week in the front trenches, then two days in the reserve trenches, and so on. After this they were marched downhill to Montecchio Maggiore. "This was a small village," says Robert, "away altogether from the mountains. We had comfortable quarters in a big loft over a café, and we enjoyed the quiet and the rest. We went back into the line for another spell, and again retired to Montecchio Maggiore. It was here that we were supplied for the first time with sun helmets and Indian khaki. We were ordered to wear the helmets from 8.30 A.M. till 5 P.M.; if any man was discovered wearing his Balmoral between these hours he was punished for doing so."

Here, alas! misfortune befell our Bobbie Harris. He and a comrade had been partaking of melons and grapes, to their own hurt. One day they found themselves obliged to seek the assistance of the Yankee doctor. After taking the temperature of the two lads the doctor remarked, "You're looking very white"; to which they replied, "Yes, and we're feeling very bad, too!"

So it had to be a hospital matter right away, and the two boys had to lay aside their big kit, attire themselves in pyjamas, and lie down to be nursed back to health, their treatment beginning with castor oil and three days of a milk diet. They had the time of their lives, though, in hospital, these warriors, when they recovered a little. There were concerts to attend,

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and a gramophone to listen to, and books to read, and cigarettes to smoke, and comfortable blue suits to wear. Moreover, they had the best and kindest people in the whole world to wait upon them.

Three weeks in bed; five weeks of convalescence spent in sauntering about the grounds of the hospital and in learning to play bowls on the bowling green; then the army corporal made his appearance, and sent our two lads out to the cross roads to act as policemen for the regulation of traffic. For three weeks, from 8 A.M. till dark each alternate day, they performed this duty. One day the colonel happened to observe the two kilties. "These two men," said he, "have had a good while in hospital." The result was that Robert and his comrade had to lift their kits and make for the base at Padua, where they were set to parades and rifle drills and bombing practice and gas tests. They were then picked for a draft and sent back to their unit.

One morning in July 1918, at four o'clock, the sergeant-major gave the alarm—"Stand to! The Austrians have broken through our line; if they come straight on, they will be down upon the plains!" Instantly the camp was filled with haste and excitement, and the motor lorries were rushed off with their loads of men for the battle front. In three hours Robert and his comrades were up on the hill, only to find that a rally had already been made and the situation saved. "Had not the Austrians tarried to seize the booty," says Robert, "the day would have been theirs."

Now, however, that the battalion was up on the Asiago plateau, it was kept there. Robert for a fortnight had another turn of the trenches, sleeping as well as he could during daytime, and going out under cover of night to bring in the rations. There was a great amount of shell-firing these days, but no direct attack. At the end of fourteen days the battalion was drawn back to the support trenches for a week, after which

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it was ordered to the Piave river for the coming great offensive.

A march to Padua, a train journey to Treviso, and a march to the Piave! These are followed by dark and wild and confused days of pitiless rain—days of crouching beneath bivouacs and sheltering behind trees, days of lying motionless on the bare ground to avoid detection by the enemy, days of ceaseless shelling from the artillery, and bomb-dropping from the aeroplanes, and outbursting of deadly clouds of poisonous gases.

Then comes the final retreat of the discomfited and beaten enemy—the pursuit by our cavalry, cyclists, motor machine gunners, and armoured cars; the hurried pursuit also by our infantry, who never actually overtook the fast retreating foe; the fording of flooded rivers by grasping hands in a long continuous chain; and rain again, and excitement and haste, and at last the rumour—the certainty—the Armistice!

Bobbie Harris was finished with war now. But he had a good time and grand sport yet at Barbiano, and his battalion had the well-won glory of a triumphal march past the King of Italy himself! He had the good sense to attend the school of education which was established in a cinema hall at Sassano for the benefit of our soldiers, choosing as his subjects of study—grammar, geography, history, reading, writing, and arithmetic.

He had one more New Year dinner in foreign parts, and amongst his army comrades he ate his turkey and roast beef and plum pudding and oranges and nuts. Then at Loniago, in the middle of January 1919, they told him that his demobilisation papers had arrived, because his employers had applied for him. Bobbie didn't believe this at first, but the orderly corporal confirmed the news—"Aye, you're going home, Harris; lucky fellow, I wish I was you."

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So Robert Harris was to be off now for good. The band played him and his fellows to the station with "Should auld acquaintance be forgot?" There were thirty-two in a truck, and no room to move, but that didn't trouble now; and there was rain pouring at Le Havre and a rough sea in the English Channel, but rain and sickness didn't matter any more. At Southampton there were good ladies on the platform waiting to push into his hand a generous bag of provisions for his journey north—sausage rolls, biscuits, chocolate, and white puddings; and there was tea for him at Birmingham and again at Preston; and a speedy discharge at Duddingston at four o'clock in the morning.

Then at last, on 20th February 1919, unannounced, Bobbie Harris was in the arms of his mother, who was sobbing—"Oh, my laddie, I'm gled to see ye. Are ye back for guid?"

BERTRAM MANN

(AGED 18),

CADET (81944), ROYAL FLYING CORPS.

BERTRAM MANN, apprentice printer, entered our employment on 28th April 1913, after having received his schooling at St. Paul's Episcopal School and at Victoria Road Public School. He commenced an apprenticeship first to the bookbinding trade, but he was afterwards transferred to the printing department, as he had a mechanical turn of mind and wished to be amongst machinery.

When the war broke out in 1914, Bertie was too young to join the army, otherwise, in his youthful impulsiveness he would have entered the ranks among the first. But the years of war rolled on without sign of end, and the Military Service Act began to enlist all the young men of the country as they came of suitable age. In due course, therefore, Bertie received his summons, and on 21st February 1917 he appeared at the Albert Hall for medical examination, and passed as an A1 recruit. There were then only four infantry regiments open to new recruits—the Highland Light Infantry, the Scottish Borderers, the Gordon Highlanders, and the Black Watch. Bertie filled up his attestation form for the Gordon Highlanders, and awaited his railway warrant for Aberdeen, the headquarters of the regiment.

Just at that time there appeared in Dundee the recruiting staff of the Royal Flying Corps calling for cadet pilots. Advertisements were published in the newspapers and speeches were delivered in the Kinnaird Hall pointing out the attractiveness of the



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service. Bertie Mann resolved to apply for admission—he presented himself at the Territorial Association Office, Panmure Street, where he was interviewed by the representative of the corps. The officer asked him a few questions—Did he go in for any sport? (to which Bertie could answer that he was fond of athletics and that he used to play in the Boys' Brigade football matches)—What education had he got?—Did he think he had nerve enough for the Flying Corps? The officer went on to point out to him that, although he would be well treated during his period of training, there was always the risk of an accident, seeing that the science of aviation was yet in its experimental stages. Again the officer asked if Bertie was willing to go, and again Bertie expressed his eagerness to enter the service. Our boy was then handed a paper to be signed by his parents in token of their assent to his joining the Flying Corps; by the headmaster of St. Paul's School as a certificate that Bertie was capable of being trained for a commission in the army; and by a magistrate or minister testifying to his character. This paper was forwarded to Glasgow, the headquarters of the Scottish Command, R.F.C. Within three days Bertie had his railway warrant in his hand, with orders to present himself on 22nd May 1917 at Farnborough, the training centre.

So good-bye to parents and friends, and off in high spirits with two other Dundee boys by the evening train to Edinburgh, where they all change carriages for London. A Dundee gentleman, who is sitting in the compartment when they enter, talks to them as the train speeds along through the darkness of the night. [Bailie Gillespie, they afterwards learned, was his name.] When the train arrives at its destination, the gentleman asks how long they have to spend in London. On learning that they are free until afternoon he companies with the friendless boys all forenoon,

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and he leads them here and there to point out to them the sights of London—the Houses of Parliament, the Strand, the Marble Arch, Hyde Park, &c. The three youths must then say good-bye to their kind friend, and take their seats in the train for Farnborough.

The afternoon journey was not a long one, and at the station they found two sergeants waiting with taxis to convey them and some other young cadets to their new home, a few miles distant.

Farnborough Camp was a huge place, sheltering beneath its canvas roofs about 10,000 air mechanics and labourers; the officers and pilots being quartered in the hotel. Our cadet school was quite a new institution, established for the training of the future officers of the army of the air. It was some little distance apart from the main camp of Farnborough, and it consisted of a score of tents grouped around an orderly tent as its headquarters. In this orderly tent were stationed the sergeants who were to be in charge of the camp organisation—to detail the cadets to their several tents and duties, and generally to look after them.

Our boys were amongst the earliest arrivals at the new cadet school. They were first led to the orderly tent, where their papers were examined and registered. Thereafter they were taken to see their sleeping quarters, Bertie Mann being assigned to Tent G2. Only one other lad was to lodge with him that first night, but later on there would be seven cadets to each tent.

It was tea-time now, and the sergeant led the lads to the marquee which had been set apart as a dining hall for the thirty cadets who had already taken up residence in the school. Bertie cannot say that he enjoyed his first army meal. There were three men servants (3rd air mechanics) to wait upon him and his new comrades, but his spirit seemed to shrink from the bare boards of the table, from his tin mug and his

tin platter, from the passing up of the mug to be dipped in the public dixie, from the thick slices of bread and the margarine. "It was not like being at home," he says; "and only with an effort was I able to swallow the food."

After tea Bertie was free till nine. As the day had been a stormy one, there were no flying performances to look at, so with a chum he sauntered along to Aldershot, about two miles off. There he was much impressed with his first sight of a great armed camp—infantry, cavalry, and artillery—with a sentry box every few hundred yards, and a sentry keeping guard with bayonet fixed.

When Bertie returned to his tent at nine o'clock he found that the air mechanics had already furnished it with fourteen blankets—two blankets for each of the sleepers who were eventually to inhabit it. There was a wooden flooring in the tent, that was one comfort, but there were no soft pillows for him any longer. So he rolled up his jacket for a pillow, laid himself down, and, tired out with the day's excitements, he fell asleep!

At five next morning a whistle sounded for reveille, and the sergeant from the orderly tent walked through the lines of tents, striking them with his cane and shouting the usual army call, "Show a leg, boys!" The lads rose, dressed, washed, and sauntered about until the whistle sounded for breakfast, which was good and plentiful.

Thereafter the cadets were mustered, and were directed to place wooden flooring in all the unoccupied tents. The flooring had already been prepared for them in the form of great semi-circles, so a pair of these half-circles just covered the floor of a tent. After the flooring the lads placed a set of fourteen blankets in each of the tents, which were now ready for their occupants.

And who were these occupants to be? Not from Dundee this time, nor from England, but from South Africa. They were not long in arriving. Tall, hardy, brown, athletic-looking fellows they were as they tumbled off the motor lorries that brought them from the station. College men, most of them—frank and friendly all, without exception. They were very tired with their long journey, and not sorry to have reached their destination. Five of these men were detailed to Bertie's tent, G2, thus making up its complement to seven. These seven then detailed from their number two orderlies to bring the next day's food from the cook-house and to do general washing up.

Again the sergeant blew his whistle, paraded all the cadets, and sent them off to the quartermaster's stores, a mile distant, for their kits. These were served out in a large concrete building, from several different rooms, a sergeant and two assistants serving at the counter in each room. Here is Bertie's list:—Cap, overcoat, and breeches; boots black and boots brown; Flying Corps tunic for walking out and for parades out of camp, also universal tunic, with brass buttons, for parades in camp; under tunic, sweater, slacks for rough work, two pairs puttees, but no small equipment. The sergeant showed the lads how to make use of their greatcoat as a hold-all by rolling up all the other articles in it. Then, shouldering their bundles, the cadets—say 200 of them, four abreast—marched back to camp. There they attired themselves in their new uniform, and packed up their civilian clothes for dispatch to their own homes.

Dinner at 1 P.M. was a more lively affair now that the South African contingent was in the hall. Bertie did not get so much entertainment from their company, however, as he had expected, for they often made use of the Kaffir language, which to him was mere gibberish.

Afterwards, however, he had a talk with his new

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friends, who told him many incidents of their voyage and of their turns of guard duty on the look-out for submarines. The conversation turning upon athletics, Bertie was interested to hear that in South Africa the schools have instructors attached to them for the training of the boys in sport.

At 8.30 the cadets were paraded for their supper mug of soup and bread, at nine the sergeant made his rounds to call the roll of each tent, then the day was done.

Next forenoon the lads were marched to Queen's Parade, detailed off in groups of thirty, and set to work at infantry drill. This went on till twelve, when they marched home for dinner. Parade again at 2.30, march back to Queen's Parade, and drill till four. The evening was free, and it was usually spent in playing football, playing cards, boxing, walking out into the country, or in going to see football matches played by other branches of the service. The canteen was a favourite resort, where many a happy evening was spent in singing songs to the accompaniment of the piano. On Saturday afternoons sports were organised on a large scale by the Sports Committee for the whole of the R.F.C.

Infantry drill was varied after a time by the cadets being sent twice a week to Aldershot to hear an officer lecture on "Machine Gunnery." The officer had beside him a Vickers aerial gun, which he took to pieces in order that the boys might see the structure of the gun and the working of its various parts. It was an intricate piece of mechanism, but the lecturer made the construction of it quite clear to his audience. He showed them where it was possible for the gun to jam in working, and told them what to do when it did jam. On succeeding days the boys were allowed to take the gun to pieces with their own hands, and to fit it up again, little by little, taking notes all

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the time for the examinations to follow. Three weeks of this course, and the cadets were divided into squads of twelve for further training with the more intricate parts of the gun.

"But what about flying?" we asked Bertie. "Did you see nothing of it yet?" "Oh, we saw them at it," he said, "in the distance. We saw them experimenting with many daring feats and tricks which had never been done before, the 'spiral nose dive,' for instance, when the aeroplane comes down vertically with the wings swinging round all the time and then swoops up again to recover itself. 'Looping the loop' was a common feat in the sky overhead."

Here, alas, ends Bertie Mann's experiences of army life and training. In the end of June as he appeared one morning at parade, he suddenly fell unconscious to the ground. He recovered during the day, and next morning he again took his place in the ranks, only to fall unconscious as before. The doctor prescribed the common army remedy, "Three No. 9's (pills), and light duty," but the following morning Bertie was unable to rise from the wooden floor. After days of formalities and ineffective remedies he was conveyed to Connaught Hospital, Aldershot, and was put on light diet, only to faint away again. Bertie knows not how many days he lay unconscious, he only remembers that he came to himself about four o'clock one morning when the nurse was washing his face. From her he learned the startling news that his mother would be at his bedside in about an hour! His mother came, but she did not tell Bertie what message had been sent to her. For a week she stayed at Aldershot, and for an hour every forenoon and afternoon she sat beside the bedside of her boy.

Bertie will never forget the kindness shown to him during his dangerous illness. He remembers the doctor's usual question when he came over to his bed—

Bertram Mann

“Good morning, sonny, how do you feel to-day?” The lady doctor, too—her kindness and attention could not be excelled. One of the night nurses, in particular, he wishes us to mention—she was so frank and cheerful, so natural and unaffected, so kind and good. When she came on duty of an evening, some of the boys used to shout—“Here comes the sunshine nurse!” “We all felt glad,” says Bertie, “when we saw her enter the ward. She used to come round all the beds to give a kind and cheery word to each of the patients.”

Youth was in Bertie's favour, and after eleven weeks of extreme weakness he recovered sufficiently to be sent, along with other three sick cases, in the R.A.M.C. Ambulance, to Alton V.A.D. Hospital for convalescence. When the ambulance drew up at the door of the hospital, one of the nurses made anxious inquiry for the “gastric ulcer case,” and, through some misunderstanding, a sturdy fellow, suffering from neuritis, made answer to her call. Thereupon the kind-hearted nurse assisted this strong man to bed with the utmost tenderness and care, while poor Bertie Mann was left to crawl into his bed unaided. When the mistake was discovered, there was no little laughter in the ward, and some confusion of face!

As Bertie gradually gained strength, he commenced to go out into the beautiful grounds and deer park of the mansion. He had to hobble on two sticks at his first outing, but he found it pleasant to sit on the grassy banks and breathe the warm summer air. At last he was able to go with a party of the other Tommies from the hospital to play and win a football match against the boys of a neighbouring cripples' school. Bertie was amazed to see the pluck and spirit and agility with which these bright and happy boys played football. The centre-half of their side had only one leg, yet he was able to hold up the opposing centre, and that centre was none other than the well-known

Bertram Mann

Sergeant Whyte of "The Queen's." There was some danger too, in playing with these cripple boys, for when their legs failed them they had a knack of thrusting forward their crutches to strike out the ball, a trick which frequently brought the opposing players to grief. After being entertained to tea, the hospital men adjourned to the gymnasium to see what the cripple boys could do at boxing, and to marvel at their feats on the horizontal bar.

Three months at Alton Hospital and Bertie was sent back to Connaught Hospital for medical examination, then to Heatherbank V.A.D. Hospital to await further developments. At last he received his final discharge from the army, a new civilian suit and overcoat, and a railway warrant for Dundee. On 24th December 1917 at five o'clock in the morning, Bertie was again under the sheltering care of his mother's roof, in time to spend his Christmas festival in the sympathetic circle of his friends.

Since these days Bertie Mann has once more knocked at the doors of the Royal Air Force, but without success. Although he never had the pride of flying up into the sky above the camp at Farnborough, he has made ways and means of ascending in an aeroplane at Glasgow one Saturday afternoon, when he had the glory of looking down from the clouds upon the crowd which surrounded the Rangers' match at Ibrox.

WILLIAM S. MILNE

(AGED 31),

SAPPER (252601), 63RD HEAVY ARTILLERY BRIGADE, SIGNAL SUB-SECTION.

WILLIAM S. MILNE, compositor, has been with us since the day he left Butterburn Public School.

He served his seven years' apprenticeship in the years 1900 to 1907. Now that the war is over, he is again at his frame, contented and happy, straight of back and clear of eye. He had no previous wish for an army life, but he is glad now that he went to the war. His experience has widened his outlook, and he has had some valuable technical training. He says that he has seen a little bit of the bigger world outside, and has learned better how to suit himself to men and circumstances.

In the early years of the war, with all their alarms and excitements, William remained at his work. His first duty was to attend to his home and his wife and his little child. But the days rolled on, and the outlook became ever darker for his country. Friend after friend he saw leaving for the field of battle, and he began to feel that it must soon be his turn to follow. So on 5th June 1916 he enlisted at the Albert Hall and volunteered for immediate service. As William had had some previous experience in the Dundee Volunteer Artillery, he made choice to be enrolled in the Royal Garrison Artillery, and he was straightway directed to report himself at Plymouth. He can tell you of his first strange night spent, along with some dozens of other fellows, under the ramparts of the citadel, in a dismal hole like a prison cell. Next day, however, he was lodged in the peace-time

William S. Milne

married quarters, where he had every comfort and convenience.

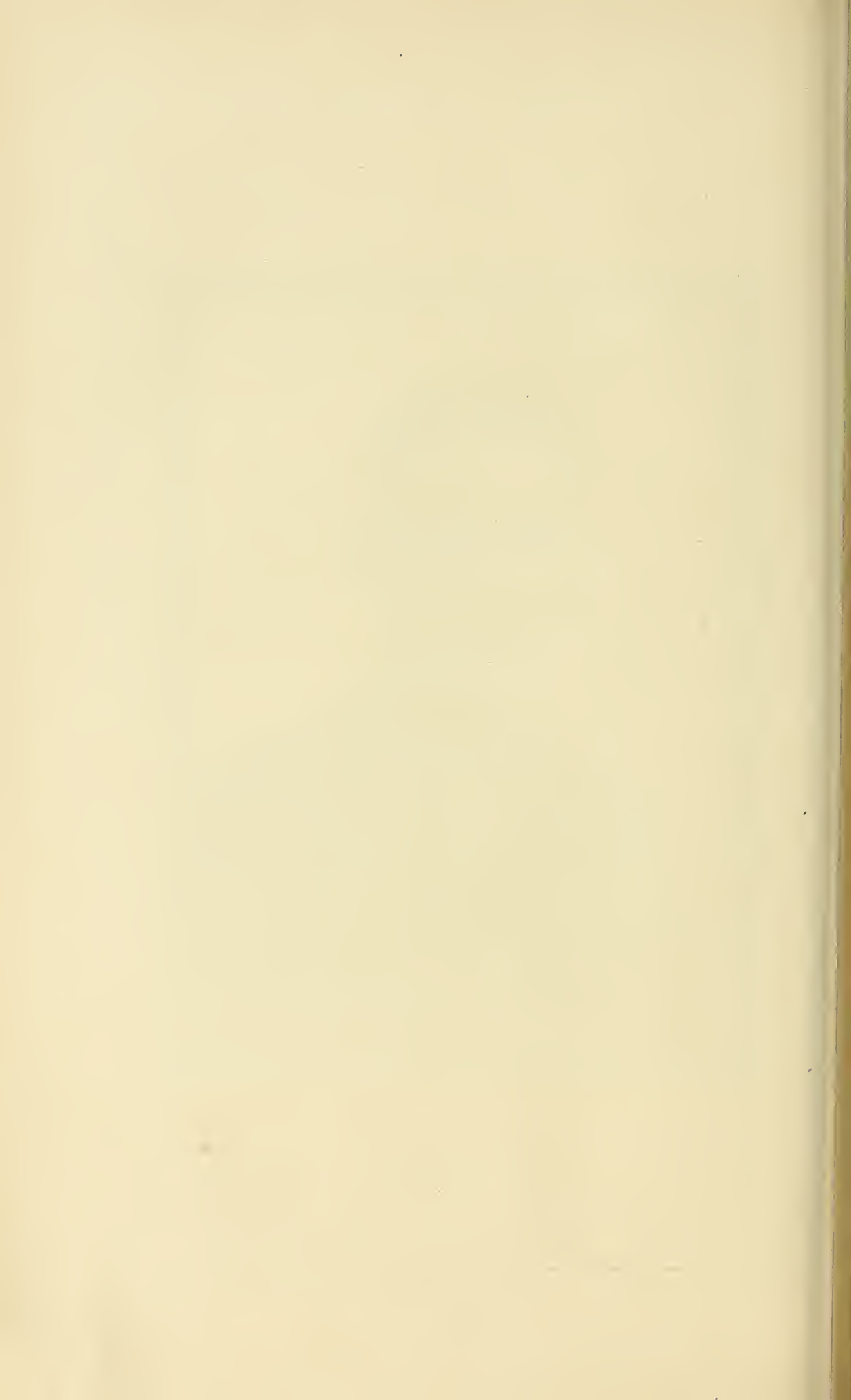
Three weeks' squad drill on the Plymouth Hoe was easy work to William, for he had learned it all at home. The only unpleasantness of these days was the having to stand in a queue for an hour and a half for breakfast, and the same again for dinner. This, however, could not be avoided, as the authorities had so many thousands of new recruits suddenly thrown upon their hands.

One morning as William was at his drill, the major came round calling for volunteers for signal service. "Any fellow," he said, "with a little education, who would like to get out of the rut, who would like to get away from the lumping of shells, ought to choose," as the major termed it, "'the eye of the service.'" Our man responded to the call, and after a simple examination in reading, writing, and arithmetic, he was sent for training to the Signal School, Alverstoke.

Here Willie Milne spent, as he says himself, one of the best summers of his life. Away from the routine and drudgery of army life, he dwelt in this school of tents, learning the language of the flag, heliograph, and buzzer during the daytime, and interpreting the messages of the flashing lamp by night. It was interesting and educative work, with good comradeship, and there was plenty of spare time for bathing, sports, and concerts. The large aerodrome at Fareham kept the neighbourhood lively, the signallers being often interrupted in their studies by the antics of the aeroplanes in the sky above them. One daring pilot was nicknamed "the mad major," as he used to come scooting down under the telegraph wires and then go swooping upward at the other side. But how often during that pleasant summer were the lads saddened and awed into silence when, looking out upon the waters of the Solent, they watched the greatest liners



WILLIAM S. MILNE.



William S. Milne

of the world bearing home their living freights of stricken men from the distant battlefields.

In the month of September the happy tent life came to an end by the school being removed to its winter quarters at Southampton, where, after a few weeks of further study, William passed his examination as a first-class signaller, and was immediately detailed for overseas service. His short draft leave was spent at home amongst his dear ones, and on 13th October he was shipped for Le Havre, with a heavy complement of all ranks and services. He will never forget his first crossing of the English Channel. The vessel was fully packed down below, and the decks were thronged above. The rain was pouring from a darksome sky, while the ocean surge was splashing wildly over the crowded decks.

It was a very wet and miserable company of signallers that formed up next morning on the French shore under the eyes of the sergeant-major who was waiting to march them to the base depot at Harfleur, five kilos distant. Here the comfort of a hot meal awaited them. Thereafter the men were ordered to prepare for medical examination. They were told that as they were now in France they would have to "stick it." A warm bath followed; their clothes, magically dried and fumigated, were restored to them, and our lads began to feel better.

The base depot at Harfleur consisted of a huge camp of tents, from which men were distributed to all the various units of the service. It was here that our lad was separated from the one link (a Dundee lad) which had up till then connected him with his own town. From now he felt he was in the world alone. For three weeks our twenty tents of signallers were kept waiting for further instructions. The men did a little signalling work from day to day, and they filled in their time with all sorts of fatigues—laying drain

William S. Milne

pipes and water pipes, clearing parade grounds, loading and unloading ships at the docks—all hard work, certainly, but not unpleasant to the willing hands. Then, in the middle of November, came the order for William and three of his comrades to join their artillery brigade. With a trainload of men and material, they were sent forward in cattle trucks on a tedious three days' journey to corps headquarters, thence by motor lorries to Gouy Servins, a village at the foot of the famous Vimy Ridge. It was on this ridge, as is well known, that the prolonged and desperate struggle took place in the early days of the war between the Germans and the French. No fewer than 70,000 men were lost by the French in the bitter struggle. By this time the British had taken upon themselves the responsibility for this part of the line.

At Gouy Servins our signallers were quartered in a big French wooden hut—the telephone room at one end and the sleeping accommodation at the other. Strange places the “bedrooms” seemed to William Milne. They were simply bunks built up in layers along the walls, and they reminded him of some pictures of a Chinese opium den. In the telephone room William served four hours out of the twelve, and here he gained his first real acquaintance with the inner working of a huge army organisation. What kind of messages did he receive? All kinds—trivial calls about waggons and lorries, messages regarding battery returns, important messages from the observation posts at the battle front, messages about casualties and ambulances, exciting S.O.S. calls from the infantry in the front trenches pleading for support from the artillery behind them. Sitting at his telephone an operator feels how great is his power and how heavy his responsibility. With a few quiet words he bids the mighty batteries begin their thunderous blasts; with his word of peace he soothes them into silence. But the operator soon learns

William S. Milne

to do his duty quietly and unconcernedly, "thinking nothing about it," as William Milne will tell you.

When off telephone duty our signallers were kept busy laying and repairing the wires leading to the various batteries and observation posts. These wires, of course, could only be laid on the bare ground, except at the crossing of a road, where they were put up on poles or buried beneath the surface. Dangerous work this was, and, as the days went by, not a few of the signallers were either killed or wounded. "We soon got over our first nervousness, however," says William, "although the shells were exploding all around us. A man knows there is no use looking for a safe place; if he selects a certain spot, that may be the very point where the next shell is to burst. I once had a providential escape myself at this repair work. I climbed a certain tree to fix up a wire, went on further and finished the job, turned to walk back, and found that the tree had—disappeared! Telling the incident afterwards to the sergeant, he coolly replied, 'Do you know yon house at the corner of Angers?—well, it's not there now!'"

The observation post work, however, is the most dangerous of all, as the man engaged in it is in close proximity to the enemy lines, and he does not even have the shelter which the trenches give to the men in the front line of battle. William can tell you of his experiences in the little burrow screened with bushes on the brow of a hill overlooking the German army. He made his way there, with one comrade, at the dead of night, and the two of them carried as much bully beef, biscuits, bread, tea, and sugar as would suffice them till the shades of night would again come down upon the scene. "It is a strange sensation," he says, "to look out upon the battlefield and to find that nothing whatever is moving, no human creature is visible to the eye." The watchers in the burrow, however, must

William S. Milne

never close an eye during their twenty-four hours' vigil, for at any instant the enemy may rush upon our lines.

At Gouy Servins William and his fellows were attached to the Canadian Corps. Fine fellows the Canadians were, brave and frank and happy-go-lucky. They were picturesque figures with their fur coats and big topboots and slouch hats—just like actual cowboys. In the evenings relief from the routine of duty was provided by picture shows and concerts. The Canadians, however, seemed to be rather short of pianists, for when a new fellow entered the room their usual question was, "Say, guy, can you play the piano?"

In the early mornings our signallers and the few civilians who were still clinging to their village used to be amused by seeing good old Colonel Marsh come strolling along the road to the telephone room. Clad in nothing but his pyjamas and his military cap, he had come out to learn if all had been going well during the night.

On the eve of Easter Monday 1917 the great guns were set agoing, and were kept steadily at their terrific work until daybreak. Then suddenly our infantry made their attack upon the enemy, and finally took possession of Vimy Ridge. William remembers well of this exciting battle—of the snow which fell so heavily that the ambulances were unable to make their way to the Ridge for the bringing in of the wounded, and of the caterpillar tractors which were brought forward to clear the way for the passage of the vans. The signallers had little to do that day; they could only stand by and lend a hand to any wounded men who were able to walk out of the battle.

After the taking of Vimy Ridge the batteries were moved forward to centre attention on the town of Lens, with its valuable coal mines. The signallers were established in the village of Aix Noulette, where

William S. Milne

they spent the rest of the summer with little excitement save the sight of an occasional aeroplane duel. One day when our infantry had been making an attack on the enemy, William was interested to see a party of the Y.M.C.A. men hurry forward, drop their boxes, rig up a fire, and serve out tea and cocoa to the exhausted soldiers. After the excitement of the conflict subsided they packed up their goods and again retired to their hut in the rear.

In the beginning of November William was transferred from the Canadians to the British front at Cambrai. Here he found a scene of utter desolation, level and bare and bleak. No civilian life was now within miles, houses were in ruins, mud was "up to the knees." William was quartered in a trench, twenty feet below ground level, at a spot ominously named "Dead Man's Corner." The trench was wood-lined, that was one comfort, and for light he had a candle! Here he rigged up his telephones and his wires, and here he listened to the great guns thundering as he had never heard them before.

On one occasion, to his dismay, the cavalry came riding past his trench, took the wrong turning, and tore up all the network of telephone wires. There was nothing for it, of course, but to start afresh, and do all the dangerous work over again.

In this dugout William came across a Dundee man, a great wag, who had been an old peace-time soldier in India. With no bed to sleep in, he had to lie in the passage, and in order to conform to the world-established custom of undressing at bedtime, he used to take off his—boots!

The great Cambrai battle took place on the 20th November. Our troops took the Germans completely by surprise. William was interested to see the batches of prisoners brought in by some of our men. Quite bewildered these Germans seemed to be at first,

William S. Milne

but they soon made themselves at home. They worked with a will at the stretchers, and at the helping of the wounded, saying they were glad to feel themselves in safety for the remainder of the war. William was much impressed by the sight of our cavalry riding into action as the trenches were taken, particularly when the turbaned Indian horsemen raced past, thousands of them, all sitting so easily and so proudly on their beautiful steeds.

After the Battle of Cambrai there was a lull for a week or so. Our signallers were moved forward a few miles to a poor ruined village outside Beaucamp. Here they expected to be pretty comfortable for a time, but on 30th November the Germans counter-attacked with overwhelming force. William and his comrades happened to be cooking dinner when the alarm was given that the enemy was advancing. They looked out of their shelter to see hundreds of our guns in full retreat—the horses at a wild gallop. So the signallers took the only course open to them. They left their dinner pots on the boil, indeed, but they took time to smash up the telephone instruments, and then in pretty quick time they made their escape, running three miles in the midst of a confused melange of horses, guns, and waggons as far as Havrincourt Wood, where they learned that the Germans had meantime been held up by the Guards.

After this set back our men took up a position in the middle of Havrincourt Wood. William's dwelling was a hole dug in the ground, with some sheets of iron for a roof. Snow was now lying on the ground, and the winter had fairly set in.

Two days before Christmas a party of the signallers set off in a lorry for the town of Albert to buy in supplies for the day of the feast. An interpreter assisted them in making their purchases, and they had no little fun in going from shop to shop collecting roast pork,

William S. Milne

mutton, cigars, cigarettes, two barrels of beer, sundry bottles of wine, and other goodies. Then in triumph they rattled back to camp with their provisions. The Christmas dinner was a success. The men found, indeed, that they had no glasses for the liquid refreshments, but the pineapple tins were of a convenient shape, and the soldiers were not fastidious. There in the middle of the wood, and far from the rest of the world, these thirty men held their Christmas festival, made their speeches, sang their Christmas carols and their favourite songs, and all were happy.

On 28th December camp was removed by motor lorries to a place three miles north of Arras. Here our lads were lodged in the side of an old railway cutting ("Athie's Cutting"). This turned out to be an unsafe dwelling-place, however, for there came a thaw and a sudden landslip, which gave the signallers a day of laborious digging to rescue their rations out of the avalanche of snow and earth.

There were no New Year celebrations in the camp, as our friend was now amongst Englishmen, who respect not our great national festival. There was a little group of Scottish enthusiasts, however, who stayed out of "bed" to bring in the New Year. They sent salutations over the wires to the batteries; then shook hands with each other, and went to "bed" in good content.

At this camp there was no great war excitement. There was the usual four hours' duty at the telephone, but there was little repairing of wires. The most of the day was spent in sawing down trees for firewood with a big two-handed saw. A cold, heavy job this was. After the tree had fallen it had still to be sawn into logs, and these had to be carried into camp and there broken up further for the fire.

The next removal was to a tiny village, Tilloy, its houses all smashed to pieces—one wall only of its little

William S. Milne

church still standing in the sun. Here William was quartered alongside of the Gordon Highlanders, who used to wake him and his fellows of a morning with their "Johnnie Cope," to the disgust of the Englishmen, who relish not the music of the bagpipes. From Tilloy William got his fourteen days' leave, which he spent on a visit to his friends at home, just missing the excitement of the Germans' last great push. On returning to France he had some difficulty in finding his brigade, as at that time everything was in confusion, but at last he found his old comrades at Bellacourt, near Arras.

Here William passed a very pleasant summer. The military authorities were at that time collecting reinforcements and ammunition for a great advance, therefore the signallers had little to do, for they were not subjected to any hard army discipline. Six of the lads were quartered in a tent pitched in front of a pretty little white chateau, the abode of a French wine merchant. William was amused with the majordomo who had been left in charge of the establishment. He was an old man with the usual long, flowing French moustache, and he used to wander about the garden singing the "Marseillaise" at the pitch of his voice. He sometimes came into the telephone office and listened to the telephone with a grimace on his happy face, but he understood not a word that was said. In his goodness of heart he used to bring baskets of apples and pears and present them to the signallers with a kindly smile. There was little speech passed between the Frenchman and the Englishmen, but there was the sincere expression of sympathy, and that was better than words. William used to watch the old man, as he wandered about feeding his hens and talking to each of them in turn. When he happened to look up of a sudden and found that the signallers were regarding him, the lads could not

William S. Milne

keep from laughing, and he laughed back to them in return.

When August came, then recommenced the war in deadly earnest. William describes to us how, on the eve of the opening of the bombardment, he and five other signallers received orders to move forward to a position three or four miles in advance of the guns and in sight of the German lines.

Under shade of night and with utmost caution these six lads groped their way to the post appointed them, laying out their wires as they proceeded. By good fortune they discovered an old German concrete "pill-box," in which they sheltered themselves, and fixed up their telephone exchange of some fourteen "holes and plugs."

William's comrades had now to hurry back for further stores, leaving him in solitary charge of the little establishment. There, in total darkness, he reported proceedings to headquarters, and in the course of the night who should join him in his fortress but the adjutant himself and his servant, bringing with them matches and candles and food. The adjutant had come forward to this dangerous position in order to see with his own eyes the opening of the bombardment and the progress of the battle—a battle which was not again to cease, by day nor night, until the enemy should call "Enough!"

Two or three days William crouched in the pill-box at his wires and plugs—a very nucleus of the great world conflict! Then as the enemy gave way, our guns, he tells us, began to work in a system of overlapping—one half of the battery kept the bombardment going while the other half moved forward to a new position, which was sometimes so close to the enemy lines that the guns were compelled to reserve their fire until the enemy should have moved backward to longer range.

William S. Milne

From the pill-box William and a dozen signallers were ordered forward to Bois Leuxmont (where the British infantry trenches had been situated at the beginning of the battle), and within a few hours our lad and a few others were sent forward to Hamlin-court, where they took up their quarters in a ruined cellar. But it was not for long they rested there, for the tide of battle was now surging eastward.

By day and night the air was filled with the thundering of guns and with the roar and rattle of unending traffic. Day by day our William's telephone office had to be removed a few miles farther east, and he had to seek his shelter in cellar or ruin or any cranny under cover. Day by day the German prisoners came streaming in—hundreds at a time. Ambulance vans rolled westward with their loads of friend and foe, now all mingled together, and now at last all friends and helpers of one another.

A busy time of it had our signallers—unloading one day and laying out their wires, then packing up and moving ahead as soon as the job was completed. They knew now that the end was in sight, for the Germans were retreating too fast to make any stand. We may name some of the places at which our lad was quartered during that last great drive.

Ervillers.—Here our signallers established themselves in a tin hut until the shelling of the Germans unhoused them and compelled them to remove to a ditch, there to work and sleep as best they could.

Mory Kops.—A place like our Law Hill Quarry, where the telephone was lodged in a deep sap beside the battery. Here our men were now fairly amongst the German stores—haystacks and engineering tools galore—which the enemy in his haste had not been able to carry off.

Lagnicourt, a few miles to the eastward.—The signallers laid their wires from Mory, only to find that

William S. Milne

the enemy had retired farther back. So William and a comrade were called to accompany the colonel and the adjutant by night to an observation post at Louverval, over Bournon Wood, from which these officers might view the actual progress of the battle. The colonel ordered forward two of his batteries of 60-pounders. William and his comrade connected their wires with the batteries; set up their exchange in a ruined cellar, and passed part of the night muffled in their gas masks.

Havrincourt.—William will never forget the dreadful sights of which he was here compelled to be a witness. He recalls how he and the other signallers, officers and men, passed through the village, now shattered into shapeless heaps of ruins, and how they found it needful to shelter for the night in a trench—a trench which had just been the scene of deathful struggle. He shivers yet when he remembers how he and his fellows carried on their work, and even ate and slept beside—aye, amongst the prostrate forms of silent men—Germans and Scotch and English—who would not again respond to the call of the morning bugle!

Flesquieres, overlooking Cambrai.—The whole town a mass of smoke by day, and by night one blaze of fire! William tells us that he felt it awesome in the extreme to look upon this great town in its throes of agony; to see the towers and spires of churches showing out wildly in the light of the conflagrations and explosions. Our guns were focussed upon the town—by day, by night—for our infantry were battling with the enemy in Cambrai, and the artillery were working in their support. Our signallers here came upon the telephone instruments and dynamo which the enemy had left behind. The lads had their jokes over the stores of good cigars and the packages of white shirts which the Germans had omitted to carry away.

La Target! Carnieres! Bousrieres! St. Hilaire! St.

William S. Milne

Vaast! Vertain! Capelle! Rousnes! Preux au Sart! La Sec! Lagnival!—William can give you reminiscences, grave and gay, about all these places. He was interested and saddened to witness the crowds of liberated civilians whom the Germans had ceased to drive away before them, and who were now streaming over to our lines. They were in a most pitiable condition, these poor people, in poverty and rags and starvation. Only with difficulty could they realise that they were freed at last from the yoke of their oppressors.

The advance became practically a daily removal and a daily stop until 9th Nov. 1918, when our lads reached Maubeuge. Now let William speak:—"At Maubeuge there was a bit of shelling and a lack of rations, and we knew we were at the crisis. A message came to us over the wire that if a German officer crossed the lines waving a white flag he was to be escorted to headquarters. Further word arrived that the German officer had actually arrived, and that an armistice was expected. On 11th Nov. 1918 we received the message that the armistice had been signed, and that hostilities were at an end!

"There was little shouting amongst us. Nobody could realise that the war was over. The news seemed too good to be true; but in a fortnight the colonel invited us all to a concert, and there he informed us that we were now going to march to the Rhine to be the guests of the German Government!

"On 25th Nov. we left Maubeuge, and set out for Germany. The march took us about three weeks. What a reception we got at Charleroi! Banners across the road with 'Vivent les libérateurs de la Belgique!' 'Long live England!' 'We knew you would come back!' Hand-shaking! Hat-raising!! Cheering!!! People walked beside us carrying cups and kettles, and they pressed us to drink the coffee as we marched.

William S. Milne

“At Namur our welcome was the same. Then came the Ardennes with their highland scenery, reminding us all of our own dear homeland.

“Lastly, Cologne.—We wondered what reception was awaiting us amongst the Germans. They on their part seemed to be wondering how we were going to treat them, but they soon learned that they had no need to be afraid of us. For the next four months I was quartered in the Masonic Hall at Frechen, just outside Cologne, and I have pleasant memories of my stay there. The Germans were all very polite, raising their hats to us, and wishing us ‘Guten Morgen!’ They all seemed desirous to learn English, and it was a common occurrence when any of us were riding in the tramway car for a German to take out his dictionary, point to a word, and ask how it should be pronounced. Tramways, steamboats, railways, shows—all were free to the British soldier; and the army authorities took over two theatres for English concerts alone.

“From Frechen I was removed to Schlebusch, on the other side of the Rhine. Here for five or six months I had another good time, first in the outhouses of a grand Schloss, then later in the village post office, on duty. Four of us lived in the same billet with a German landlady, who, although she knew no English, was untiring in her endeavours to make us feel at home. She seemed never to be pleased unless we were happy and even singing to her.

“On 13th Sept. 1919 came my demobilisation papers. I left at once for home, crossed the Channel for the tenth time, and rolled north in the Scotch express to find waiting me at the Tay Bridge Station my own dear wife and my darling little Nessie!”

ROBERT W. MUIR

(AGED 26),

SAPPER (88637), 205TH COMPANY ROYAL ENGINEERS.

ROBERT MUIR, gas engine attendant, was in our employment from 31st January 1910 to 6th April 1915. In his boyhood he attended Hill Street Public School, and during the last two years of his schooldays he manfully worked in the evenings as a message boy in a toy shop. After having been in several situations he came to assist us at the sack printing machines, but when a vacancy occurred in the engine-room he put his hand to the suction gas engine, and learned how to humour its apparently tricky ways.

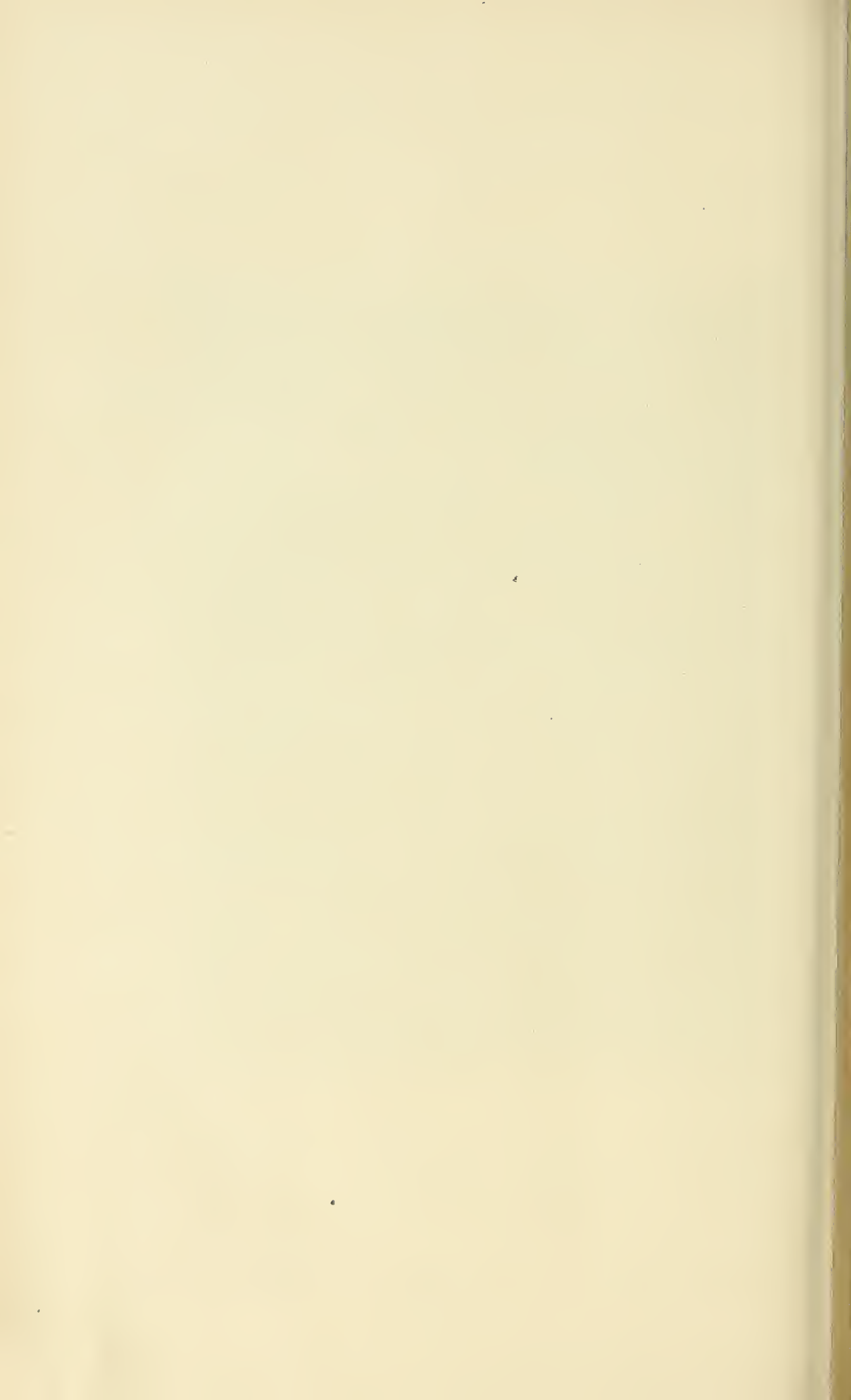
Previous to the outbreak of the Great War Robert had been a Territorial Volunteer in the 5th Black Watch, so when there came the dread news of the retreat from Mons he felt that duty called him to join the army.

Now in those days there was forming in Dundee a Field Company of Engineers, with Major Murdoch at its head. Into this company Robert, with a number of his friends, decided to enlist. On 29th March 1915, therefore, thirty youths made their appearance at Major Murdoch's office in Reform Street. They were duly registered, and were sent to the Nethergate Recruiting Office for medical inspection. A week later the new company of about seventy men was mobilised at the Drill Hall, Bell Street, and for three months thereafter the lads were trained on the football ground at the New Esplanade.

In due course orders came to proceed to Masham,



ROBERT W. MUIR.



Robert W. Muir

on the Yorkshire moors, for further training. So on a sunny June morning, in high enthusiasm, "Dundee's Own" Company of Engineers—250 strong—was escorted by the band to the Tay Bridge Station. As Dundee was greatly interested in the departure of its boys, crowds had gathered in Nethergate and Union Street to shake hands with the lads, to hand them gifts, and to wish them a safe and speedy return. A special troop train was in waiting, and it rolled them straight to their destination, where they arrived in the early afternoon.

It had been a lovely morning when the boys left Dundee, but there was a gloomy and pitiless downpour of rain to meet them at Masham Station, and it beat down upon them as they marched the four miles to their camping ground upon the moor.

Here, now, see our lads standing in the rain waiting dismally until the G.S. (general service) waggons should bring their tents from the station. Then they set to work. Tradesmen they are, the Field Engineers—builders and bricklayers, joiners and carpenters, plumbers and mechanics. To such men tent-pitching is but child's play. There are five men in a squad for the pitching of each tent—one man to set up the pole, four men to knock in four pegs with a mallet and to pull the four guy ropes taut—and there you are! There is a race between the various squads as to which will be finished first, and there is mirth and merriment as the whole of the tents are set up, sure and fast—in a twinkling!

Meantime there are other squads setting up the cook house, with its field ovens for the cooking of the stews and puddings and for the baking of the bread. Others are building what they call a trench fire, in the form of a long narrow trench, with a pair of iron rails along its edges, a fire at one end, a chimney of biscuit boxes or of some handy drain pipe at the other. On

and across these rails sit the "dixies" for the making of the tea, and the current of fire and flame and smoke runs along beneath them and heats the whole row of pans at once. Other men are working at the latrines, so that the camp may be kept in proper sanitation. Others are setting up the mess store tent for the flour and various foodstuffs, others the medical tent for the doctor, others the tents for the officers. A canteen, too, has to be erected—a marquee big enough to accommodate the whole company at one time, a shelter where they can write letters and read books and play games and drink tea and coffee. It must have a well-built fireplace of bricks, topped with a chimney of biscuit tins running up through the roof.

Where do these handy men find tools and materials for doing all these wonders of building, think you? Well, they have their tool cart with them, and out of it they can get any tool they want—for boring holes, or screwing threads, or sawing wood or metal. As for materials, bricks are provided in plenty, and timber is brought from the sawmill; but if a neighbouring farmer should find that his fence posts are mysteriously disappearing, or that some of his trees have been cut down, he has only to render his account to the C.O., and he will be well repaid for all his loss.

The cooks and the cooks' assistants have not been standing idle all this time. First of all they bestir themselves to look for a good water supply from stream or ditch. The water has to be drawn up into the water cart by means of a hand pump. It has to be inspected by the medical officer; it has to be treated with what the men call "chloride of lime," if it be of doubtful purity. Then there is cooking to be done—tea and stew and potatoes and bread pudding with condensed milk. Oh! they had a grand feast, these fellows, when they finished their work that afternoon on Masham Moor!

Robert W. Muir

"But you didn't really do all that work on that one short afternoon," we protested; and Robert made answer—"Oh, maybe not all that day, but it was done the next day or the next; it didn't take us long to finish."

The bugle called the men to their tents that first night at nine o'clock, and by 9.30 they were all a-bed on their waterproof sheets on the bare ground—seven men in each tent. The sergeant of each section of fifty men called his roll, and all composed themselves to sleep. "Cheery we all were," says Robert, "every man of us. We were wonderfully comfortable, and it was surprising how soon we all became accustomed to our new way of life. There was never a grumble to be heard amongst us."

Two months the engineers spent profitably on Masham Moor. They did not have full equipment of stores and appliances, certainly, but the section officers lectured to their men on trenching and sapping and mining and bridge building, and they drew upon the blackboard diagrams of hand grenades and magneto plungers for detonating charges, and they pegged out upon the moor their schemes of barbed wire entanglements, until the minds of the men were awakened to all the wonderful possibilities of their service.

Then the company was removed to Salisbury Plain, to a regular army camp of the R.E.'s at Perham Down, near Chisledon. Here everything was complete and comfortable for our Dundee Company. The establishment consisted of wooden huts, covered with asbestos sheeting, and roofed with corrugated iron; and the huts comprised sleeping quarters, baths, wash-houses, canteens, concert halls, and dining halls.

Each section of our engineers now got a tool cart all to itself, and work and training went on apace—trench digging, mining, barbed wire fixing, rifle drill, and musketry.

Robert W. Muir

Six weeks at Perham Down, then a change was made to Fiskerton, on the river Trent, for training in bridge-building. This was new and interesting work for Robert Muir and his comrades, and they went at it with a will, first by the light of day, then under cover of the darkness. We tried, in our ignorance, to learn from Robert how a bridge could be thrown from one bank only over the deep, dark river, and he gave us enlightenment somewhat as follows:—For the building of a pontoon bridge the pontoons, flooring boards, anchors, cables, and all the necessary fittings have, of course, to be prepared beforehand, because the actual work of laying the bridge has to be done at a run, in double-quick time, under the fire of an imaginary enemy. Pontoons are huge, empty boxes, something like the body of a boat, and one of these pontoons, weighing 14 cwt., completely occupies the floor of a big waggon. Now into each pontoon is stored the various beams and boards which are to link up with it in the structure of the bridge, and these completely fill the pontoon, every piece in its proper place, like a child's box of blocks. On the night appointed the men march in silence to the river bank, followed by the waggons with the stores. Then, at a given signal, in the black darkness, the work begins. Each man knows his number in the game—in turn he runs for beam or board or cable appointed for his hand; he deposits his burden on the bank, in proper place, in proper order. Next, the heavy pontoons, sixteen men at each, are lifted from the waggons and floated on the river. Then the race begins anew, and beam to beam and link to link the structure magically fits itself together like a house of bricks. By the right each man runs forward to the river, returning by his right, so that he may not knock upon his fellow in the dark. If some one makes a blunder with his duty or his burden he is at once discovered, for the man behind him finds

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he cannot fit his link or pin or shackle in its proper place. The bridge thus built along the river bank, how is it "thrown" across the flowing river? Very simply, for the lower end is anchored to the bank, while the upper end is pushed out upon the stream, to be carried by the current across to the other side, where it is made fast. "It is wonderful," says Robert, "how quickly a bridge of this kind can be made. And after it is finished all the duties have to be gone over again, backwards, in the reverse order, until the bridge is completely dismantled, and the waggon's are loaded up, neat and trim, for the homeward journey."

Robert Muir's memories of Fiskerton, however, are not entirely taken up with bridge-building. He cannot refrain from telling us about the kindness which was shown to him and his comrades by the people of the village. "It was a lovely little village," he says; "it all looked so nice with flowers and fruit gardens and apples and plums. The people were very kind. They used to throw fruit to us as we marched past. We were often pulled up by the officers for breaking ranks to pick up the fruit. If one of us chanced to pass along the street alone he would be asked to come into a cottage and have tea. This happened repeatedly. I once went into a little shop to buy some plums. The good woman took my cap and filled it, then she refused to take any money, saying, 'It's as little as I can do for you.' And it didn't matter into what house you went," Robert continued, "you could always get tea or coffee with ham sandwiches at a very trifling charge. We used to give money to the children, as it was the only way we could try to repay the kindness of the villagers. A soldier's washing, too—anybody would do it for you. The people knew we were from Scotland, and they seemed to like to hear us talk. Of course, all this was in the early days of the war; such generosity could scarcely be expected to continue.

Robert W. Muir

“One day when off duty, my pal and I walked over to Southwell Lace Factory, and we ventured to say to a gentleman at the gate that we would very much like to see through the works. He at once asked us to come in, and he spent a long time with us, showing and explaining to us the looms. It seemed to us almost a miracle that these thousands of threads were so swiftly running through the loom and weaving themselves into the most beautiful flowers and patterns.”

After a fortnight at bridge-building on the Trent, our lads were moved to Tidworth, on Salisbury Plain, for training in mining and tunnelling. Here they were taught to dig down a certain distance for the ordinary shelter of a trench, to excavate the side of a trench for a shellproof chamber, and to tunnel far forward for a land mine. Hard stuff they had to work amongst—a mixture of chalk and boulders of flint at the top, with pure chalk down below, which broke into slabs and layers. Robert laughs yet when he calls to mind how he and his comrades on this job were all white, “like bakers.” Then they had “demolitions,” which means exploding charges in the tunnels which had just been made.

A few months of this exciting and interesting work, and a draft of fifty men was called for to reinforce the regiment in France. This draft included Robert Muir, who was now transferred to Llandudno to await further orders.

The next eleven months at this lovely seaside resort, Robert tells us, were the pleasantest of all his time of training. The camp was pitched on Deganway Hill, and its tents sheltered something like 1000 trained recruits who had been gathered in from the various training centres. On entering the camp, Robert was asked if he was proficient in all branches of his training, and he was thereupon classified as being in Part 3. If a man felt that he was deficient in any branch, he was

Robert W. Muir

put to further training until he was ready to be put into Part 3. These Part 3, or proficient men, were not sent to further training, but were employed at any odd jobs about the camp. Robert was sent to the cookhouse to act as cook's mate, and there he was taught how to fry ham and how to make a stew.

All went well for a time, then there came a storm of wind which played havoc with the camp upon the hill. Not a single tent withstood the hurricane; the tent-pegs lost their hold in the shingly soil, the tent-pole went up through the roof, and the canvas came down upon the sleeping inmates. Robert having thus been rendered homeless, was sent to live in civilian billets. Of this part of his experiences he does not forget to tell us that of all the kind people he has met "the Welsh were the kindest of them all."

Every week the doctor inspected the recruits, and sent them overseas in batches as they passed his tests. He seemed to have doubts as to the soundness of Robert's heart, so he kept the lad back time after time. At last, however, Robert was allowed to pass, and he was sent off in a draft of about 250 men, first to Southampton, then across the Channel to Le Havre. A crowd of French people were waiting on the pier to welcome the soldiers with much shouting and cheering and gesticulating. Suddenly, amid the general rejoicing, rose a scream of terror. A young girl in her excitement had fairly jumped off the pier into deep water. But there were British hearts upon the vessel's deck, and it did not take many seconds for a British lad to jump into the sea and to bring the girl back to safety. Then the shouting and cheering were redoubled as the transport slowly floated up the Seine. Robert tells us that the rescuer was afterwards awarded a medal for his gallant conduct.

At Rouen the troops were disembarked, and were marched to a great rest camp some miles out of the city

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Here they were lodged under canvas, nineteen or even twenty-one men in a tent. There were some Indian troops quartered in this camp. Robert has vivid memories of the games of draughts and dominoes which he used to play with these allies of ours. "They were good players," he says, "and they beat us often, but they couldn't endure being beaten themselves; they lost their temper then, and became cross and disagreeable. We always kept on good terms with them, however; we used to give them cigarettes, and they brought us presents of the pancakes which they baked."

About a month Robert Muir was kept at this camp. He was classified now as an engineman, but that was not one of the trades in demand up the line. At last he read his name upon the fateful notice board at the door of the orderly room, and he knew that he was to join the 16th Irish Division at Kemmel, where he was to hear the thunder of the guns and to witness something of the dreadful works of war.

Robert and 200 of his comrades were now entrained in open cattle trucks for their journey to the battlefield. He explains to us that they were not all to be rolled forward as a complete company to a certain destination; they were to be dropped off the train at many different points—two men here, four men farther along, six men perhaps at another place. These small parties were each and all destined to take the places of precisely the same numbers of men who may have fallen at certain definite points in the line of battle. "Everything," he says, "in war organisation has to work out to a nicety. You cannot take forward to the front an indefinite number of men, because there will not be rations for them. Rations are provided at every point for the precise number of men who are to be engaged there, and not for a single man over that number. There will always be food enough for each man on any given day, but there will be nothing over."

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The train journey was a slow process. Robert says that the boys used to run up to their engine for hot water for tea, jumping on their own truck when it came trundling along. The engine-driver scolded them for taking away so much of his hot water; he couldn't keep up steam for them, he said; he would give them no more. So they picked up a few big stones from the railway track, built a fire on the floor of their truck, and made it burn with old wood until they were all as black as negroes, and until the fire dropped through the floor to the track beneath. Some bold spirits insisted on riding on the top of the truck, and Robert saw at least one foolish fellow brushed off by a piece of scaffolding which was hanging down from a bridge.

It was midnight when Robert reached Kemmel, but it was a midnight very different from the quietness and the restful darkness of night in our own land. The near horizon was illumined with a ceaseless play of light, with sprays and showers of fire, with the blue flashes of the guns, with the ruddy flares of S.O.S. from the trenches, with rockets and signals to right and left. No Man's Land was as bright as day, and the thunder of the mighty guns was unceasing.

Robert explains to us that at that time Kemmel Hill was in British hands, but it was threatened by the Germans, who were determined to gain possession of it. The British trenches were on the plain two miles in front, and our great howitzers were planted behind Kemmel Hill.

When Robert and his corporal left the train they made inquiry for their 156th Company at the R.T.O. (railway transport officer), the official on the railway platform who has the duty of directing soldiers to their units. He gave them roughly the direction in which they must walk. "Hold straight up the road there," said he, "till you come to a little batch of wooden huts; ask there for R.E. Farm—that is your headquarters."

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So these two men set off through the unknown country. In a couple of hours they were safely housed under the shelter of a hut, which they could not but notice was well sand-bagged all round to protect it from the flying shrapnel.

Next morning they were detailed to the section with which they were to work, and at night Robert was out on the left of Mount Kemmel digging away manfully at the trenches in preparation for the great attack on Messines Ridge. Wychaete was to be the objective for which he was working.

"Did you have a long tramp through trenches and saps before you got up to your working point?" we asked him.

"No," he replied; "we did not have far to walk in the trenches, for there was a wood which protected us. An officer met us and led us to a place called 'Shrapnel Corner,' where we were set to repair a trench which had been blown in. We took up the duckboards and relaid them properly in the bottom of the trench; then we built up the sand-bagging on the parapets. We had a 'pushing party' of infantry to bring up on light trucks the stores that we required. It was really a reserve line we were working on, about a quarter of a mile behind the front line. It was intended to be a place to which the infantry could retire if they were driven back. The enemy made no special attack that night, but the shells which came over from time to time were a new experience for me. I was excited by the danger and the novelty of my position, but I soon got accustomed to the rush and the burst of the shells. At first you duck at every shot, although they may be flying high over your head and landing miles beyond you, but soon you learn to know the sounds better; you can tell the direction of the shot, and whether it is likely to come near you."

For a week Robert worked at these reserve trenches

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for the boys who were to make the great adventure. In further preparation for the advance he and all his comrades were drawn back to Locre to practise the actual attack. At Locre trenches had been dug and the ground prepared as a model of the bit of country which was to be taken from the enemy. With great minuteness the officers explained the whole scheme to the engineers, then day after day experimental attacks were made until every man knew exactly to what point he was to rush and which positions he was to transform into "strong points."

"What are 'strong points'?" we asked Robert. "Strong points," he replied, "are T-shaped trenches, strongly protected with barbed wire. They are intended to be points of security into which the infantry can take refuge after the first rush forward. The various 'strong points' are afterwards all connected together to form the future front line of trench work."

We also learned from Robert that the R.E.'s always go over the parapet with the infantry, and they follow them closely in order to secure any positions won from the enemy.

At last the fateful day of the battle arrived. "We were all paraded," says Robert, "and were marched up to the reserve line, just 200 yards behind the front. There we stood, packed shoulder to shoulder, while the batteries opened fire first from our side, then from the Germans. There were four hours of a fearful hail of deadly missiles. The wonder is that so many of us could stand there with so few casualties. The worst bit of ground was behind us, however, between the trenches and the batteries.

"Just as the day was breaking our infantry went over the parapet, and we closely behind them. There was little speaking—only a wave of the hand as a signal, for the noise of the guns was terrific. Then followed a confused plunging of horses as the field

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batteries rushed forward with their guns and waggons. And over all the noise and confusion, blotting all else into comparative silence, rose the mighty rumble and roar of our great mine under Messines Ridge, a mine on which our men had been digging for the past two years. When the smoke and dust of the explosion cleared away there remained no enemies to battle with, only a great yawning crevasse in the side of the ridge, with a few groups of dazed and frightened men crawling out of their dug-outs to give themselves up as prisoners."

Our infantry went far beyond their objectives. Robert Muir and his comrades were busy for three days making everything secure with "strong points" and barbed wire in case of a counter attack.

After the battle our engineers were sent to Ypres to replace, for the artillery, a heavy trestle bridge which had been blown up by the enemy. They did the work in the daytime, as they were hidden from observation by an intervening hillock, but they had to camouflage the progress of their operations. Whenever an enemy aeroplane appeared in the sky, a whistle was blown as a signal to "Take cover, boys," when they all hid till the danger was past; then the whistle sounded "All clear," and the busy workers again appeared at their task.

In two days the bridge was completed, and Robert with his comrades was drawn back for a week to the rest camp at the back of Poperinghe. Thereafter he was sent to St. Leger for trench work, for the constructing of dug-outs, and for the building of huts to serve as rest-houses for the troops coming out of the front line.

At Tunnel Trench Robert again went over the parapet with the boys in a successful attack, and he did good work for them in the establishing of "strong points" to hold their positions.

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Robert and his fellows were next moved to Ronzoi, a village in front of Peronne, where great operations were in progress. A German attack was expected, and much work was done to secure our reserve line. The dug-outs were all strengthened with a 4-foot thickness of concrete and rubble. Steel sectors were also constructed as centres of defence. These were formed in shape of a three-quarter circle of corrugated steel, sand-bagged and concreted until the little forts appeared to be impregnable. For three months this great work was in progress, and to Robert's eyes all seemed secure. Then commenced the German barrage—two hours of gas shells—four hours of heavy shells—with the awful and unexpected result that our artillery was knocked out of action! Over the German parapet came the Prussian Guards, wave after wave of the grey uniforms. Our men were—obliged to retire!

"We were all drawn back to Peronne," says Robert, "and on our way we laid mines beneath all the bridges on the canal, so that the infantry could blow them up as soon as they crossed. They destroyed all the main bridges, indeed, but they did not trouble with the smaller ones. It was fortunate for us that the Germans were not aware how successful their attack had been for they did not venture to push forward.

"From Peronne we were sent to Hamel, to hold it at all costs against the German rush. Engineers, cooks, army service men—no matter to what branch of the service the men belonged—all were gathered to defend the place to the last man. We saw the Germans crossing their parapet to attack us, but we managed to keep them in check for two days until our reinforcements came up, when the position was made secure.

Amiens being now threatened by the enemy, Robert and his comrades were sent to labour there, with the help of Chinese and Indian labourers, at the con-

Robert W. Muir

structing of defence works, trench works, barbed wire entanglements, and "strong points."

Boulogne was next considered to be in danger. Robert had a busy six weeks at the village of Merville, in front of Naippe forest. He worked mid shells by day, 'mid bombs by night, sheltering in any scrap of ruin or shed or shack or cellar. As there were big ammunition dumps in the neighbourhood, the village was under constant bombardment by the German guns and aeroplanes.

But our reader is wearying of the tale of the herculean labours of these indefatigable workers. Nature herself put a stop to Robert Muir's activities, for he was laid low with Spanish influenza, and was taken to the hospital at Boulogne. On recovering he was sent to join the 5th Division Royal Engineers at the Cambrai front for our last great drive, but when the train drew up at Cambrai, a French civilian met the boys with the shout—"La guerre est finie!"

Six weeks more Robert served with his company at Namur. He then received his leave, with the unexpected intimation by the commanding officer that "if he got a job when he went home he would be demobilised." Robert's journey home was as fast as boat could sail or train could speed.

On the evening of the 2nd day of the New Year 1919, see him standing in Dundee on his own door mat. There is no response to his call for admittance, but he knows where to look for his dear ones. In his next door neighbour's house he rejoins them all at a happy New Year party—his wife and bairnies three, singing songs of joyfulness because at last the war is at an end. Now the children take their daddy a willing prisoner, and with shouts of glee they seize upon the booty in his haversack, and they gaze with wonder, not unmixed with awe, at the ferlies he has brought them from the enchanted land of France!

JOSEPH OGG

(AGED 35),

3RD AIR MECHANIC (58334), ROYAL FLYING CORPS.

JOSEPH OGG, printer, served his apprenticeship with us from the year 1896 to 1903. Before the war broke out, Joe had served as a corporal in the 1st Vol. Batt. Royal Highlanders. He would, therefore, have liked to join the colours when his country called for help. Home duties, however, claimed his attention, for his mother was old and frail, and he was her only stay. He remained away from the recruiting office until the Derby scheme was put in operation; then, on 12th December 1915, he presented himself at the Albert Hall as a man willing to serve his country and his King. According to age, he was entered in Group 16, and was then dismissed to wait further orders.

When Group 16 was called up for service, Joe's home duties still claimed his attention, and in May 1916 he received exemption from army service "on personal grounds."

The times became more critical, and the army again demanded men. In December Joe was summoned to appear before the Military Tribunal in the Council Chamber to answer questions and to plead his case. The military representative pressed the army's claim for the lad's services, either in this country or abroad, so Joe's exemption was withdrawn. He was sent to the Albert Hall for medical examination, and was classified under category B1, which meant for him "garrison duty abroad."

About the beginning of 1917 the Royal Flying

Joseph Ogg

Corps advertised that they were open to receive B1 men. Joe wrote to London—to the Polytechnic, Regent Street—applying for admission. He was accepted, and was instructed to ask the recruiting officers to post him there.

Joe now bade his friends farewell, and on 5th February he betook himself to the Nethergate Recruiting Office, where he received his five days' pay and ration money. A recruiting sergeant conducted him and a dozen other lads for different regiments to the Caledonian Railway Station, gave them their railway warrants, and sent them off to London.

It was midday when Joe arrived at Euston, for the train had been delayed in the Midlands by a heavy fall of snow. As he had never been in London before, he felt that now he had needs be on his mettle. Dinner was his first consideration, so in a restaurant he had dinner indeed, but without any meat, for those were the days of short commons. Joe then sallied forth in the falling snow to seek his destination—the Polytechnic. He entered the building expecting to be taken in charge by the authorities and sent to barracks and to duty, but to his surprise, after being asked to “call again to-morrow at 10 A.M.,” he was shown to the door.

Alone he was now, and friendless, in mighty London. After some anxious thought he decided to stroll about the streets till nightfall, and then seek advice from a policeman. Fortunately the storm was over, and the streets were full of interest. Soon his attention was attracted by a playbill announcing that that very evening, in the Shaftesbury Theatre, the world-renowned Harry Lauder would appear in the revue “Three Cheers.” So Joe said to himself that he would go to hear the great comedian. The entertainment would help to pass the time, and at its close he would seek a lodging for the night. “It was the



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first bit of luck I had that day," Joe tells us; "for scarcely had I entered the theatre when I came upon a Dundee chap who had been home on leave, but who was now on his way to rejoin his battalion on Salisbury Plain." This new friend proved a friend indeed, for after the entertainment he took Joe with him to the Y.M.C.A. quarters at Waterloo Station, where they passed the night very comfortably.

About a hundred lads had gathered at the Polytechnic next morning when Joe again presented himself. Their papers being duly entered, the lads were marched to the tube station, whisked to Waterloo Station, and sent off to Farnborough, the headquarters of the R.F.C.

Joe found that the camp consisted of lines of brick buildings, each line having its own special title—the "Malplaquet Barrack," the "Blenheim Barrack," and so on. To the first of these lines his squad was sent—to the dining-hall first for tea, at which the lads made friends with one another.

"Our sleeping quarters were rather crowded that night," Joe says, "for there were ninety-six of us in the hut which had been built for forty. Each man having been provided with a blanket, we all managed to lie down, but there was not an inch to spare."

Next morning reveille went at 5.30, when the lads rose to find that the water pipe was frozen, and that therefore they would be denied their morning wash. Breakfast proved to be somewhat of a scramble, for as the dining-hall was too small to accommodate all the new squad, the meal had to be served in two relays. Indeed, it came to be a joke amongst the lads that, when a fellow was not satisfied with his helping at the first service, he went in again with the next relay for another breakfast.

All that day and all the next day were spent by the recruits in attending at the S.R.O. (special re-

Joseph Ogg

cruiting office), in prolonged waiting in a marquee, and in medical inspection. On the third day, after receiving their equipment and uniform, they were inspected by an officer to ensure that the clothing fitted properly. Finally the whole squad was marched off to the regimental hairdresser. This official cropped their heads with his patent scissors, until the poor lads were all made to feel as miserable as—*convicts!*

Joe was now attached to the Salvage Section. His duty was to unpack the huge wooden cases which brought over from France the damaged and smashed aeroplanes. As these boxes were being brought to the depot every day, there was much work involved in lifting them from the lorries, in unpacking them, and in sorting out their contents for the different workshops. Other lads were detailed to strip the broken planes, to tear off the fabric, and to lay aside all the serviceable parts.

One day, Joe tells us, there arrived at the depot, intact, an aeroplane which had been captured from the Germans. The interesting thing about this aeroplane was that it was fitted with both the German colours and the British, in such a way that the pilot might display the British colours when he was flying over our lines, and the German colours when he returned to his own people.

On 25th February Joseph Ogg and a score of others, after having been supplied with full overseas kit, marched to Aldershot to await other reinforcement drafts. Then on 19th March they trained to Southampton, embarked in a crowded transport, and crossed to France on the stormiest night that the sailors had ever seen in the English Channel. The transport lay off Le Havre until daylight, when the pilot came on board and steered the vessel, amid the waving of flags and the cheering of the inhabitants, up the Seine to Rouen.

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Here our lads were marched some miles uphill to the Rest Camp, where they were quartered under canvas, twelve men in a tent. They had a wooden floor beneath them, but they found that the one blanket allowed to them was but a poor defence against the cold wind which blew into the tent from the snow-covered ground outside. Two days they lodged here, living on bully beef and biscuits; then in the afternoon of the 22nd they entrained for St. Omer.

It was snowing heavily when the train left Rouen, and it was a new experience for the lads (twenty-eight in number) to travel in a cattle truck with open ventilators. Each man wrapped his one blanket closely around him, and sat down on the floor for an ordeal of endurance. The train moved very slowly, so from time to time the lads jumped to the ground and ran alongside the truck in order to stimulate their circulation. Every now and then the train stopped to let men off or take men on, and at times, in the darkness of the night, it engaged in a spell of shunting and bumping at a siding. In twenty-five and a half hours, however, it succeeded in reaching St. Omer, where the draft, now feeling rather miserable, was housed in the Cavalry Barracks, at that time the headquarters of the No. 1 Aircraft Depot. This was a huge building, five or six storeys in height, accommodating more than 1000 men.

Next morning the lads reported at the orderly room, which they found, along with other administrative offices, in a neighbouring chateau. Thereupon Joseph Ogg, along with four of his comrades, was allotted to the Balloon Repair Section at Arques, and was at once driven thither in a motor tender.

The village of Arques, as Joe discovered later, was on the main road to Bethune, and also on the railway line, therefore it was conveniently situated for trans-

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port purposes. The aircraft establishment there was not yet completed, and workmen were busy at the fitting up of a gas plant for generating hydrogen gas wherewith to fill the observation balloons. Joe had now the satisfaction of starting to his war work proper—the responsible work which was to occupy his whole attention for almost two years to come.

For a few weeks, until the gas plant was in working order, Joe set his hand to anything that required attention. He painted huts, he painted the water tower, he painted the dining hall. Then he was sent to the filling benches—to the work of filling with compressed hydrogen the iron cylinders which were sent up the line for the filling of the observation balloons at the front. Joe learned about the gas production process that caustic soda was first of all dissolved in water in an iron tank. It was then run into the generator proper, along with the requisite quantity of silicol. The two liquids were stirred up by a revolving agitator worked by an electric motor, heat was generated, and hydrogen gas was evolved. The gas was stored in an enormous gasholder, which was capable of containing 10,000 cubic feet of gas. From this gasholder the hydrogen was drawn by petrol-motor compressors, and was pumped along to the filling benches. These benches, which were arranged for the filling of sixteen cylinders at one time, stood in an open shed not far away from the generating plant. The cylinders themselves, 6 feet in height and weighing $2\frac{1}{2}$ cwt., had been brought down from the battle front, empty, and now they were lying in great piles ready to hand. Joe's work was to couple these cylinders to the gas tube, and to stand beside them until the pressure gauge registered, on some days 1850 lbs. per square inch, on other days 1950 lbs., according to the temperature of the air outside. While two of the benches were each occupied in filling two

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pairs of cylinders, the other two benches were put in readiness to take up the work when the gas was turned off from the first benches. In this way the work went on from morning to night and from night to morning without intermission. The lads worked in two relays—the first went on duty at 4 A.M. and worked till 1 P.M.; the second squad commenced at 1 P.M. and continued at work until the cylinders were all filled.

For the loading and unloading of the heavy cylinders on and from the railway trucks German prisoners were first employed. About one hundred of these prisoners, Joe tells us, came up to the work every morning. They were good workers, but they considered that they were being employed on munitions, which they knew to be against the rules of war. They protested, therefore, and were set aside. After the Germans there came negroes from the West Indies, but they refused to do such menial work. They had come to fight the Germans, they said, not to be labourers, and so they were sent up the line. Next came Chinamen. Joe says that sometimes they would work, and sometimes they wouldn't; some of them were diligent, steady workers, and some were loafers. Once more recourse was had to the German prisoners, who proved to be the best workers of all.

The work of the filling benches was interesting, so long as there was some element of novelty in it, but later on it became very monotonous—there was so little to vary the daily and nightly routine. The lads sometimes saw the soldiers of various regiments as they came down from the Ypres front for a rest, but there was little opportunity for intercourse with them. Joe and his mates could only walk alongside the battalion for a little way, talking as they walked, and then return rather sadly to their benches and their cylinders. Once Joe heard his name called from one of these marching battalions, and he had the

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pleasure of meeting an old Arnot F.C. chum. This lad was then on his way from Ypres to the Somme, where he was afterwards made prisoner by the Germans, but he is now once more safe at home.

On another occasion Joe had the opportunity of meeting three of his old companions and a number of Dundee lads in a neighbouring village, where the 4/5th Black Watch happened to be stationed for the night.

In June the monotony of the life at Arques was somewhat rudely broken by a terrific storm of wind and rain. The storm lasted only half an hour, but it caused a loss of no less than £5000, for it carried away four balloons, costing £1000 a-piece, and it destroyed a portion of the great balloon hangar.

There was a padre who did his best to make life pleasant for the lads at Arques. He used to come up to the camp twice a week from one of the hospitals. He started a kind of debating society, to meet every Wednesday evening. Joe was present at two of the meetings, but at that time there was a good deal of work on hand, and the usefulness of the society was somewhat spoilt in consequence. The colonel, too, announced that Sabbath services would have to be discontinued, as work was of such extreme urgency that the men would require to be on duty Sabbath and Saturday. It speaks well for this good padre that when he had arranged to hold a service in the camp on Easter Sunday the men (who had been promised a half-holiday if they accomplished a certain amount of work by a certain date) ceased work in order to go to the Easter service, making up afterwards for the lost time by working on their own free afternoons.

For light recreation a number of the lads formed a concert party entitled "The Arquelites," who gave a very good concert every month during the winter. The colonel presented the depot with a cinema

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apparatus, which gave some displays, but on an occasion when it was giving an exhibition at headquarters, it came to a disastrous end by catching fire and burning itself out.

On 18th May there took place a German air raid, which for the time effectually dispelled any feeling of dullness in Arques. Our lads had not hitherto been subjected to any anxiety from visits of enemy aeroplanes, although these frequently passed over the village of Arques and the town of St. Omer. But after the German advance in March a British ammunition dump had been established in a field adjoining the aircraft repair camp at Arques, and, of course, the German aeroplanes came flying over to look for this dump. They discovered its position; then they came in force to destroy it. Joseph Ogg vividly remembers the events of that awful night. The fierceness and violence of the attack may be judged from the statements in the official report that "sixty-eight machines came across" and that "one hundred and sixty-nine bombs were dropped." The raid lasted from ten o'clock till four on a fine moonlight night. Joe could scarcely see the aeroplanes, they were flying so high. He could only see the showers of our anti-aircraft shells bursting round their targets.

"The first bomb which was dropped from a German aeroplane," Joe says, "struck the cordite in the field, and the whole ammunition dump went up into the air in a series of fearful explosions. The aeroplanes still came on, however, one after another, and each threw down its deadly missiles. Thirty-one Chinamen living in a camp one hundred yards along the road from us were—*annihilated*! The bombs commenced to drop round our camp; the balloon shed went on fire, and two balloons were consumed in the conflagration. Then we received orders to clear out of the huts and take to the open country—every man for himself.

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There were 350 of us in all. As we crossed the field, we saw a German aeroplane come swooping down towards us in the glare of the searchlight. It was only a hundred yards away from us when it dropped its bombs—one, two, three, four fearful explosions! It saw us in the field, and its machine gun began to fire its bullets amongst us. Strange to say, not a man was hit; but we made a narrow escape that night. A number of us lay down on the bank of the canal, but, of course, we could not sleep. For two or three nights afterwards we rested on the canal bank. The Germans, however, did not pay us another visit.

“We went to see the remains of the ammunition dump, and we found in the centre of the field a great hole, a hundred feet in circumference and thirty or forty feet deep, where the big shells had been lying. It so happened that not far away there were 2000 gas shells in storage—these fortunately the Germans had just missed.”

After the aeroplane raid Joe's important and responsible work went on in a steady routine, day after day and month after month. Generally the lads filled 700 cylinders per day, but at certain times, in order to comply with the demands of some great push, as many as 1000 cylinders had to be charged.

On the great day of the Armistice, Joe remembers, he began duty at 4 A.M., and ceased work at 1 P.M. The captain told the lads that he would relax his discipline that day, and that he would overlook anything in reason. So the boys did the best they could to celebrate the occasion. The second relay came marching up to the filling benches, and they escorted the first squad home to the huts to the music of old tin cans! In the evening, in the rain, they all went into the town to see the flags and to hear the cheering!

Duty, however, began again next morning, and

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cylinders were charged as usual for the next fortnight. Then, as the lads had accumulated as many as 5000 charged cylinders, the compressors were turned off and work ceased.

Men filled up their time as best they could with their own hobbies and handicrafts. Joe says that some of the lads made pretty souvenirs out of old shell cases. They filled the case with lead, and then with a hammer and a simple punch they elaborated very artistic designs of roses and ivy leaves. When the punching was finished, the lead was melted out, and the edge of the shell was turned off neatly at the top.

Joe had his second leave in January 1919. From Dundee he made application for a certificate of discharge, which in due course he received. Now he is glad to find himself back at his printing press, and it gives him pleasure to think that he was able to give to the service of his country two years of arduous and responsible work.

PETER RITCHIE

(AGED 46),

SERGEANT (88623), 205TH FIELD COY., ROYAL ENGINEERS.

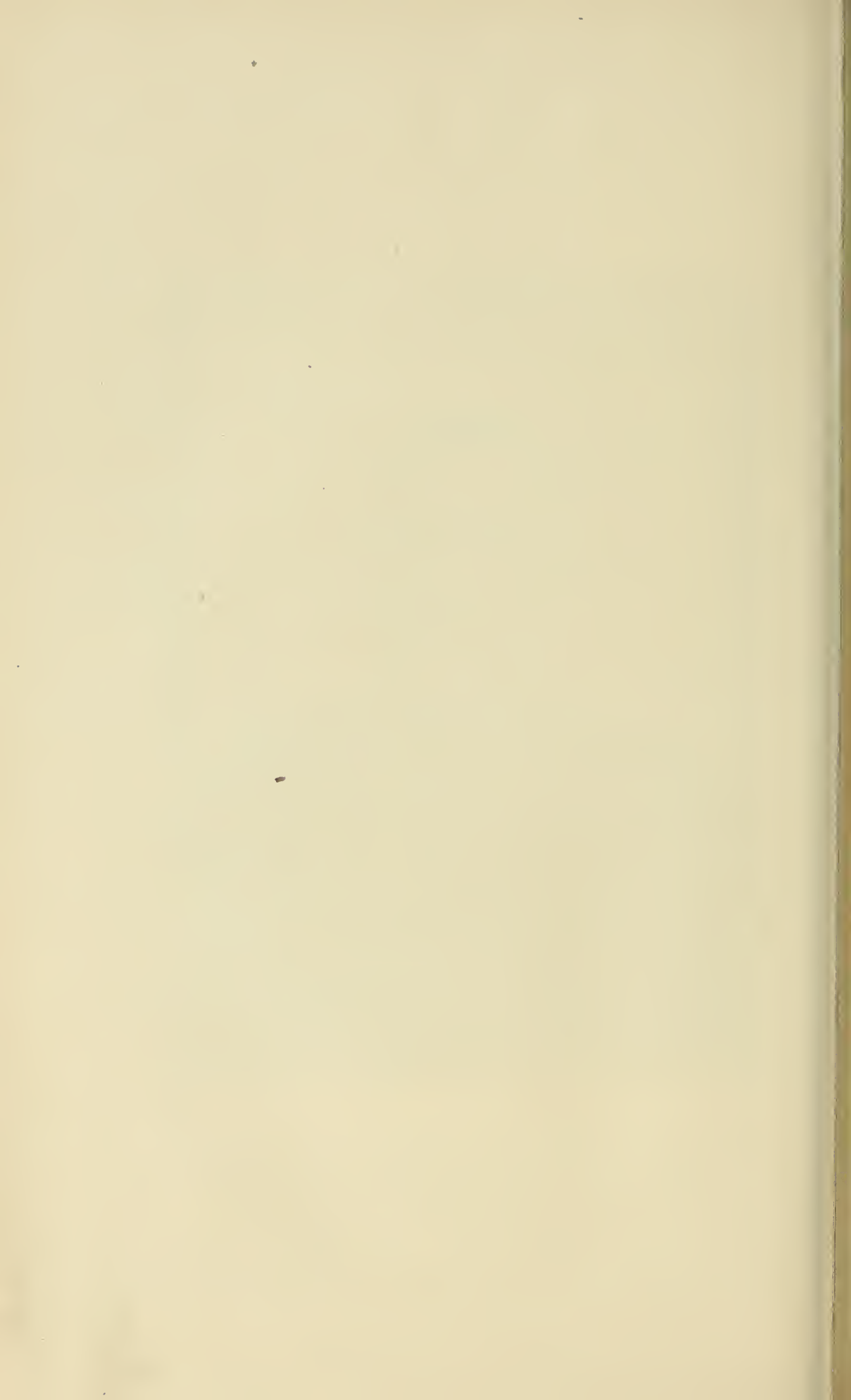
PETER RITCHIE, letterpress printer, served his apprenticeship with us from the year 1885 to 1892. As a boy he had attended St. Salvador's Episcopal School and Wallacetown Public School. He worked for some time at the painting trade, but changing his mind he decided to be a printer instead of a painter, and came to us to learn the working of the printing machines.

Peter had a long military training before the war broke out. In 1887 a company was formed in this neighbourhood for prosecuting submarine mining and Tay defence work. The corps was called the "Tay Division Submarine Miners"; the commanding officer was Colonel W. H. Fergusson; the adjutant, Captain Coyle; the headquarters, Broughty Castle. Peter Ritchie, being attracted by the new service, applied for admission in 1888. Alas! his height at that time was only 5 feet 4 inches, and the Submarines demanded 5 feet 6 inches. "Would you not like to learn the bugle?" they asked the applicant. Peter, of course, greatly wished to learn the bugle, so he was made "bugler" to the corps. Five years afterwards he was promoted to be sergeant of the band.

Peter and his comrades did a great deal of hard, self-denying work in and around Broughty Castle. In the evenings, after a long day's work at their own trades in Dundee, they used to hasten down to the Castle to learn knotting and splicing of ropes, jointing



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of electric cables and manipulation of dynamos, telephone and telegraph work, signalling by lamp and flag and disc, the laying out of mines in the river and the taking up of mines from the river, the running of searchlights to their emplacements at the south end of the harbour, &c. &c. Their Saturday half-holiday, fair weather and foul, these lads devoted to the same absorbing work.

Once a year, perhaps, on some great occasion, before the eyes of the distinguished visitors who thronged the deck of the "Sir William Reid," the lads had the joy of firing some of their mines and of witnessing some old weather-worn hulk of a ship being blown up to the skies! The sight was worth all their previous work and self-denial.

In 1898 Captain (now Major) Montgomery succeeded Captain Coyle as adjutant of the corps, and under his direction the work went on with increased enthusiasm.

In 1908, twenty years after its formation, the whole establishment of the submarine miners was taken over by the Navy, and the corps was entirely disbanded. An artillery school of gunnery took the place of the school of submarine mining, and the volunteers made way for the men of the regular army.

The spirit of the service, however, was not yet dead among our youths, for next year, in 1909, there was inaugurated in Thomson, Shepherd, & Co.'s schoolroom in Taylor's Lane the "City of Dundee Fortress Company Royal Engineers." The commanding officer of the new company was Colonel F. S. Stephen, afterwards succeeded by Major Richardson.

In March 1910 Sergeant Ritchie was rewarded for his twenty years of devoted service by being decorated with the Volunteer Long Service Medal, and in December 1911, at the annual distribution of prizes, the sergeant, as being the oldest long-service soldier

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of the unit, was honoured with the King George's Coronation Decoration Medal.

Four years Sergeant Ritchie served with the Fortress Engineers at the practical operations of entrenchments and bridge building, which they prosecuted on the Links of Monifieth and Barry. He retired from active duty in 1913, but by request he joined a body of men termed the "National Reserve," of which the branch headquarters were in Kirriemuir, and of which the purpose was to keep all men of military training in touch with the service.

Now it so happened that Peter was spending the Dundee holiday week of 1914 in Kirriemuir when he read the startling news that "war had been declared against Germany," and that "all National Reserve men must at once report themselves to the Town Clerk of Kirriemuir." Peter called therefore at that gentleman's office and gave intimation that he withdrew his name from the Reserve, as he desired to join the colours. Next day he returned home to Dundee.

In the early days of war excitement and anxiety there arose in Dundee a movement for the formation of a unit of Engineers. Major Montgomery and Captain (now Colonel) Murdoch were interested in this, and Sergeant Ritchie was asked to call a public meeting to consider the proposal. The result of this meeting was that fifty names were obtained as a nucleus of the new unit. Another public meeting was held in November, when additional names were obtained. On 15th February 1915 the War Office gave definite authority for the raising in Dundee of a Field Company of Engineers, and the Town Council took the unit under their auspices to the extent of fitting out the lads with their first clothing. As a drill hall for the new unit the Town Council granted St. John's (Cross) Church, Tay Street, which for some time had been standing unoccupied. The old pews

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were removed from the area of the church, and the hall was made ready for its new tenants.

Recruiting for this unit commenced at the Nethergate Recruiting Office on 29th March 1915, under the active superintendence of Major Murdoch, Sergeant Ritchie attending nightly as a recruiting officer. When the number of recruits had increased to seventy it was decided to make a practical start with their training. On the morning of the 4th April the men were mobilised by Major Murdoch in front of the Recruiting Office as a branch of Kitchener's Army, and were marched to the Drill Hall, Bell Street. Three army men (one from Ireland, one from Newcastle, and one from Edinburgh) were present to superintend the proceedings, and they at once saw that Sergeant Ritchie was a man ready to their hand. "You fall out, sergeant," was their command, "and put the men through some movements." Sergeant Ritchie called out as his assistants the fellows who already knew something of drill. He marched the men hither and thither, and to and fro, and up and down; he caused them to perform Swedish drill movements and jerks and contortions until the joints and muscles of the new recruits became as supple as india-rubber; and all this under the critical eyes and to the complete approbation of the three instructors from the army. At mid-day the men were dismissed to go to their own homes for dinner, but in the afternoon they were back at the Drill Hall for another hard spell of work.

Training was carried on in this way for a week, but on 12th April the men were mustered at their own hall in Tay Street, and were marched for drill to the football pitches at the New Esplanade. There now, forenoon and afternoon, rain or shine, from April to July, Dundee's Own Corps of Engineers worked at their drill — preliminary drill, company drill, Swedish drill,

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skirmishing operations, and flag signalling, the routine varied only by a long route march into the country. As the teeth of more than eighty of the men demanded attention, from day to day in squads these fellows were marched off to the restfulness of the dentist's armchair.

In the beginning of July, when the corps had increased to full strength, there came an order to Major Murdoch from the Scottish Command to remove the Dundee Company of Engineers to Masham, Yorkshire, for further training. The ground there having been already laid out for the future work of the Royal Engineers, our lads were now to be trained to field operations. They were also to begin to gather together the horses, mules, harness, waggons, pontoons, and all the other multifarious impedimenta of a real, active regiment of engineers.

Sergeant Ritchie, a corporal, a lance-corporal, and thirty-five men were therefore sent off as an advance party to prepare the way for the others. It was morning when they left Dundee, but it was six o'clock in the evening ere they reached their destination. The C.R.E. of the district was impatiently awaiting them at the station.

"You've taken a long time to come from Dundee," said he. "Get your gear packed in these two waggons, and shove off."

Our boys, glad to be freed from the confinement of the train, enjoyed the three and a half miles' tramp to their station on the moor, where a single tent flying the Army Service Corps bunting denoted that that branch of the service was in charge of the ground. Sergeant Ritchie began operations by dispatching half a dozen of his men to the A.S.C. tent for rations—bread and cheese and tea and sugar, not forgetting a good leg of beef. He set other lads to the making of a trench fire with the help of a

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generous sprinkling of paraffin oil upon the fuel. He appointed two cooks and two cooks' mates to look for water and to make the tea. Then—see the whole party sit down upon the moor to enjoy their picnic. "It was the best cup of tea I ever tasted," says our man, "although the water had perhaps been a little brown."

Tea over, the lads made a beginning with the erecting of the tents—three tents, in which the whole of the advance party were to be sheltered that first night on Masham Moor, and one tent in which the rations were to be stored for safe keeping.

Sergeant Ritchie was the last to go to bed that night. It was midnight before his duties were finished, for on his shoulders lay the responsibility of seeing that everything about the little camp was in proper order. He was so tired that he was glad to lie down upon the green grass "as he stood"—in complete uniform, even to cap, greatcoat, and boots!

Next day he orders parade at 8 A.M. Then follows a delightful morning picnic with tea and bread and tasty stew. At ten o'clock up rides the C.R.E. himself to give his orders. He hands to Sergeant Ritchie a prepared plan of the ground, and he points out to him that the positions of the various tents, latrines, &c., have all been prescribed for him. "There's your plan now, Jock," he says, "carry on." So our man sets his boys to work, to measure and peg out the ground, to dig and drain and build, to pitch the tents in the specified positions.

In the afternoon another advance party, 'from Henley this time, comes upon the scene. Their tents are already standing ready to receive them—fourteen blankets in each tent, two blankets for each of the occupants. Tea also is waiting them. To their sergeant-major, as being the senior in rank, Sergeant Ritchie hands over the plan of the growing camp.

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Work now proceeds vigorously with the additional help of the Henley men. The joiners put their skilful hands to the erecting and roofing of the wash-houses and cooking kitchens, the plumbers to the plumbing work, the builders to the building and draining work, and the whole camp rings with the sounds of hurried industry.

There was much work to be done, for the camp was planned to accommodate not our Dundee unit only, but also the other three companies of the complete regiment of R.E.'s. The A.S.C. provided the 150 tents and the two large marquees; they furnished the daily rations, the bricks, water pipes, drain pipes, and basins—but they left all the handicraft work to the two advance parties.

Next day it rained intermittently all day long. Indeed, the rain seemed to fall nearly every day at Masham, so that the ground around the camp quickly became a muddy slough. That same afternoon there came marching from the railway station Dundee's Own 205th Company of Engineers, with Major Murdoch at its head. Sergeant Ritchie now took over his own command of Section No. 1.

Here at Masham Camp our lads were established until 22nd August 1915. Their days were filled with rifle drill, firing exercises, route marches, building field ovens, making roads, and felling trees. This last item of practical field work would soon have brought the boys into trouble with the landowner, who had no wish to see his trees doomed to an untimely end. On one occasion he protested to Sergeant Ritchie, who made answer that he had two hundred mouths to feed, and that he must have firewood for his ovens. The laird was very kind—"Come down to-morrow to the saw-mill," said he, "and we'll see what we can get for you." He was as good as his word, and from that day forth the ovens did not lack firewood.

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During these months at Masham there were assembling on the moors around, not only Royal Engineers, but all the other services of the complete 35th Division of Kitchener's Army, until the Yorkshire hills became familiar with the calls of the bugles and the music of the bands.

On 22nd August the division was ordered to Chisledon, Wiltshire. Sergeant Ritchie had an exciting time superintending the clearing up of his camp to the satisfaction of the M.O. (medical officer). At two o'clock in the morning the boys were at work harnessing the mules to the pontoon waggons and baggage waggons, loading up the latter with spades and shovels and tents and kitbags for conveyance to the railway station. Then at nine o'clock—as the waggons rumbled out of the gate, and the men followed with measured, steady tramp—amid the relics of the deserted camp there gathered an interesting little company of boys and girls and old women. Into the bags and baskets and pillow-cases with which these people had armed themselves there disappeared the sundry little oddments which had fallen from the table of the Engineers. Lastly a pit was dug, and into it were hurriedly thrown all the odds and ends and scraps of untidiness which still littered the place. The ground was smoothed over fair and clean, and the last of the men marched off the premises, followed by the cheers and blessings of those who had benefited by their stay at Masham.

At 11 A.M. the train left Masham; at 2 A.M. next morning it arrived at Swindon, where the transport section was disentrained, and was ordered to proceed with horses and mules and waggons to Chisledon by road. A little later, and the rest of the boys were glad to tumble out of the train at the dark little station of Chisledon. Five miles of a march through the night brought them into the comfort of a great

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military camp, with tea to refresh them and wooden huts for shelter.

Next day they had a holiday—to get settled down, to draw blankets, to put their gear in order. Then for a whole month they had the grandest of practical training on the chalk hills of Wiltshire. Each section of sixty was now entrusted with a tool-cart containing a wealth of useful implements—picks and shovels for excavating, spades for cutting sods, billhooks for cutting pickets (revetting stakes), nippers for cutting wire, a six-foot measuring rod, a reel of barbed wire and gloves for handling the same, a reel of 14-gauge binding wire, and a host of other things.

Given the tool-cart and the implements, our Dundee company was next allotted a tract of country for their operations. Trench-digging, according to regulation, was of course the first lesson to learn. We asked Sergeant Ritchie to inform us as to the correct method of procedure, and we shall give his reply—"To begin with, the line of the proposed trench is pegged out upon the ground, and this line is measured off in portions of three feet long. To each man is given his 'task,' as we call it, a piece of ground three feet long by three feet wide by three feet deep, and out of this cubic yard he is set to pick and shovel the earth and flints and chalk. His task completed, he leaves the hole, and his fellow seizes pick and shovel to widen the three feet to six feet and to deepen the three feet to six feet, taking care, however, to leave untouched the portion required for the fire step. The sides are prudently made to slope backwards, one in five, so that there may be no danger of caving in, but they have yet to be firmly revetted (or pinned) with the help of brushwood and revetting pickets. The practice trench is thirty feet long, with a traverse at each end running out nine feet at right angles to the main trench, then nine feet parallel to it, then

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back again to the first line. The traverse has to be built up three feet higher than ground level, so that it may afford head cover in case of enfilade fire. Loop-holes are made along the upper edge of the trench, and each loophole must be artfully concealed with some scrap of rag or tuft of grass."

The work at Chisledon was varied from day to day, for the boys had to learn all about saps and dugouts and communication trenches and barbed wire entanglements and observation posts and telephone connections. Night operations, too, gave additional zest to the work. In describing these Sergeant Ritchie brought out an item of information which is not universally known among civilians, that is—that the infantrymen are, to a certain extent, at the bidding of the engineers; therefore, the latter are not favourites of the former. For example, a scheme of night operations is planned, and certain units of infantry are detailed off to meet the engineers, at a certain place, at a certain hour. These infantrymen carry their full equipment of pack, loaded rifle, fifty rounds of ammunition, and trenching tool. On arrival at the ground the infantry officer reports to the engineer officer, and hands over his command. The R.E. gives the order—"Get off your packs, lay them down in line, and fall in here." Then he details off so many of his own N.C.O.'s and sappers to work along with the infantry. The first squads start operations and do three hours digging against time; the second reliefs do the same. Barbed wire entanglements are fixed up exactly as in actual warfare; saps and communication trenches are cut and firmly revetted. Dugouts are burrowed in the blackness of the night. No lamp is lit, no match is struck during the hours of darkness. At 2 A.M. the haversack ration is eaten. At daybreak the officer in charge goes his rounds, flashes his lamp into the excavations, and calculates with the help of his measuring rod the

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number of cubic feet of earth thrown out per hour. Sergeant Ritchie used to pity some of the very young lads at the digging on rainy nights, and he always endeavoured to have a dixie of warm tea to refresh them at their tasks.

To bridge-building the lads were introduced during a week's scheme of operations at Fiskerton, on the river Trent. Dundee's Own Company here had the pride of breaking a record for speed in their work, for in $22\frac{1}{2}$ minutes they set into the river fifteen bays (or arches) of pontoons, linked them all together, and floated one end of them to the opposite bank—completing a bridge so firm and strong that an infantry regiment could have marched over it without mishap. By daylight our engineers performed this feat; and by night again they were able to do the work in record time.

On the 22nd October, the whole of the 45,000 men of the Division were set in motion on a combined army scheme of manœuvres. Reveille awakened the Dundee Company at 2 A.M., when all hands were sent to the clearing of the camp. Sergeant Ritchie remembers that he and his squad were obliged to search for a place where they could empty the straw mattresses, and that at last in the darkness they took the liberty of emptying out the stuff at the door of a farmhouse. Breakfast was at four o'clock, and by five the boys were off on the march, laden with rifles, ammunition, and full packs. The morning was cold, for the ground was white with the first winter snow. Every hour a halt was called for ten minutes' rest, and on one occasion the column happened to draw up in a little village just in front of a cottage door.

Now let the sergeant speak—"What was my surprise when an old lady came out and asked if I would accept a cup of tea. There was only one answer to give, of course, and with one of the sappers I partook of the good lady's hospitality. Not only tea did

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she give us, but she would have me store away in my pack on the top of the tool cart a four-pound cake of her own baking and oranges besides. She said she would like to see Scotland, for she had a liking for Scotch people.

“Twenty-three miles we tramped that day, arriving eventually at Devizes. The boys were almost sinking under their heavy packs when we at length came to rest at an old, disused farmhouse. I remember that, after setting the guards, our first business was to pour water into the old pump to coax it into working order. That night my couch was a stone floor, with a single blanket for bedding; but the night was not a very long one, for at 4 A.M. we were up again, and at five o'clock we trekked away to Sevenake. We moved ahead all right till nearly mid-day, when the unexpected happened — a thick fog descended and absolutely blotted out everything in the landscape. We might as well have been blind men, for the country was new to us, and we could see no landmarks to guide us. The result was that the scheme of manoeuvres was abandoned, and we engineers were marched straight to Perham Down Camp.”

Here at Perham Down the division was fitted out for overseas. Sergeant Ritchie was kept busy in the completing of the Dundee Company's equipment of tools, implements, pontoons, waggons, harness, and a multitude of other indispensable articles. At first the lads were served out with puggarees and helmets for service in Egypt, but contrary orders were received, and on 29th January 1916 the whole division left Perham Down for France. Sergeant Ritchie was withheld on account of his age, but he was promoted to be acting sergeant-major (under two lieutenants) over the reserve sections of the 203rd, 204th, 205th, and signalling companies—318 men in all, not then required in France. The sergeant-major's duty was

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to see that these 318 men were kept busily and usefully employed, subject to any instructions he might receive from the officers in charge.

Perham Down Camp, an establishment large enough to accommodate 100,000 men, had first to be cleared up, the wooden huts scrubbed, the windows polished, and the stables cleaned. Everything in the camp, down to a screw nail, had to be put in its right place or returned to the stores, for the camp must be left to the satisfaction of the medical officer. Twenty N.C.O.'s assisted Sergeant Ritchie in his duties, for there was much responsible work devolving upon him. He had to see that the guards were set at the proper hour, that the cooks were at their posts, that the rations were forward, that the pay clerk had money in hand to clear his obligations, that the men were busy at their tasks, that discipline was timeously enforced; in fact, he had the weight of an army upon his shoulders during that month. He says he could not have accomplished the task had it not been for the good nature and helpfulness of some of the officers and men. "It was a blessing, too," he says, "that there was a Y.M.C.A. hut up the road, for it interested the men during the evenings with its concerts and pictures, and it supplied them with what was best of all—temperance refreshments."

On 22nd February the reserve section of engineers received orders to leave Perham Down Camp for Wales. After a long day's railway journey they arrived at 10 P.M. at Llandudno platform, where the section was divided into two. Sergeant Ritchie and his company were marched over the suspension bridge into Conway. Several N.C.O.'s, who were in waiting, at once detailed the reserve men to civilian billets. Sergeant Ritchie was fortunate enough to be quartered with a Mrs. Jones, a kind old lady. Although it was now past midnight she was waiting to welcome him

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and his fellow engineer. She greeted them at first in her own Welsh language, but the sergeant was obliged to have the words interpreted to him. "Come away in and sit down, laddies, and have a cup of tea," she said, leading them into her bright and comfortable parlour, where she set them down at the well-furnished table, and she talked with them until the clock struck—three!—when they retired to rest.

It was the first night's sleep these lads had enjoyed in civilised surroundings since leaving home, and they felt that now surely their lines had fallen in a pleasant place. Sergeant Ritchie says that this was the nicest billet in which he ever lived, for Mrs. Jones was always so kind and motherly with the lads who were quartered in her house. Her husband was at that time an invalid, but he also took an interest in the lodgers. Very soon they were asked to take tea with the invalid, and in course of time Mr. Jones declared—"I think I'm better since you lads came here." Concerts they had in the evenings, for one was a fine piano player and another was a master on the clarionet, so, says the sergeant, "we were never out at nights."

After six weeks of this pleasant billet, with daily duties at routine work in the orderly room of the depot company of engineers, Sergeant Ritchie was removed to Llandudno. Here again his billet was comfortable and pleasant, with the atmosphere of music filling the evenings. In May he was sent to take up his quarters in the camp on Deganway Hill as field work instructor to No. 9 Depot Company. As at that time the Derby scheme was bringing forward a host of new recruits, our man was detailed, along with a staff-sergeant, to put a squad of a hundred of these lads through a course of field work.

The sergeant enjoyed his duties at Deganway, for he was well supported by his officers, and his recruits were

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of a superior type, including in their number no fewer than five schoolmasters. All branches of field work were practised — demolitions, entrenchments, bridge-building (suspension, trestle, and pont), day operations and night operations. The staff-sergeant also gave a short course in geometry.

In the middle of June 1916 Sergeant Ritchie and sixty-three N.C.O.'s, after medical inspection and approval, were ordered off to France, to be trained as gas school instructors. They had a smooth passage over the Channel, touched at Le Havre, disembarked at Rouen, and marched to the Base Regimental Depot of the R.E.'s, where they were quartered for four days. The draft then received orders to proceed to Halfaut, where at that time the gas school was stationed. Travelling by rail to St. Omer, the party was met by a sergeant, who marched them $8\frac{1}{2}$ kilos to Hueringham, where he broke up the squad for billeting purposes. Sergeant Ritchie, with twenty-five others, was detailed to take up quarters in Madame Dominion's billet. The name of the landlady promised well, but the place where our man was lodged was a loft associated with a stable. He has therefore little praise to give to his first French domicile.

Here in Hueringham the men of the R.E. draft received a special course of training in hand grenades, in smoke bombs, and in gas cylinder and gas mask work. They were then employed as instructors of the new drafts of infantry who were from time to time being sent forward. Sergeant Ritchie was also sent on escort duty, to guide the new drafts forward to the line, to Bethune or to Tottencourt, near Thiépval. There he heard the thundering of the guns on the Somme, and he saw the sky illumined with the distant fire. We asked him if he felt any desire to be in the thick of the conflict. He shook his head as he replied, "No; I had no inclination to be in it. I saw

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too many ambulance trains coming down laden with sadly injured men. I shuddered to see the awful work that the war was doing."

Four months passed, and on 22nd November our sergeant, with the R.E. draft, was ordered to return to Rouen. Here he was detailed to be an instructor for the "Bull Ring," and in preparation for this he himself was again put through a course of training in gas chamber and gas mask exercises, in rifle exercises, in bayonet fighting, and in shooting while wearing the gas helmet. He then marched his quota of three hundred men to the arena, where he was shown how he must drill these men into thorough efficiency in all these branches of training. This now was his work for the next six weeks. It was no child's play either to men or instructor.

Sergeant Ritchie was next summoned to parade before the adjutant. "You are for a draft," said the adjutant. "Is there any special unit you would like to go into—the Army Troops Company or the Artisan Works Company?" The sergeant chose the latter. He was thereupon sent to Henriville, near Boulogne, where he was appointed standing orderly sergeant of the camp of the 52nd Artisan Works Company. In this camp there were quartered about 160 men, who were occupied in all kinds of artisan work—in moulding and turning and fitting, in water supply and drainage works, in hut erecting, and in roadmaking. The sergeant's duties consisted in superintending camp arrangements, and in drawing clothing from the stores and serving it out to the men, &c.

Six months in this post, and Sergeant Ritchie was promoted by the C.R.E. to Pont-de-Briques and St. Etienne to act as the sergeant in charge of the personnel and discipline of the R.E. detachment in that area. This was an honourable post, and there was no little responsibility in connection with it.

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The establishment consisted of one hundred N.C.C.'s (Non - Combatant Corps), who were occupied in digging and draining and building and painting, and sixty - three N.C.O.'s and sappers who busied themselves on the same work. Sergeant Ritchie, besides superintending the rations and the general camp arrangements, had to detail the men to their several spheres of labour, according to the requisitions sent in to him by the officers in charge of the work. He is proud to tell us that there were several big establishments erected while he was stationed at Pont-de-Briques. There was an evacuation camp to hold 6000 and another to hold 3000; there were huts and stables at Echingen; there was a chlorinating and pumping station at Carly; there was a hospital, and also a physical and bayonet-training school at Hardelot—and for the erecting of these establishments the whole of the building materials had to pass through his department.

We asked the sergeant if the Non-Combatant Corps did their work well.

“They were rare workers,” he replied with enthusiasm. “They were clever, brainy, well-to-do fellows, for they included in their number school teachers, draughtsmen, and architects. These N.C.C.'s were the best workers we had.”

After eight months in this post, Sergeant Ritchie was drafted into the office at Pont-de-Briques to assist the company quartermaster-sergeant in his work of drawing rations and clothing and of making up the pay-sheets for the 52nd A.W. Coy., which had been transferred hither from Henriville.

On the 25th October our man got his long-looked-for leave, which he spent in the peace and happiness of his own home in Dundee. He was on his way back to duty when the Armistice was declared. He was in the midst of the excitement and the

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cheering at Victoria Station, London; he, with a crowd of other leave men, marched from the train at Folkestone to the boat in the escort of a squad of wounded soldiers in hospital blue uniform, waving flags of triumph; he crossed the English Channel in a boat whose head had been so unsettled by the glorious news that it took no less than six hours to make the passage; then at Boulogne he plunged into a regular delirium of cheering and shouting and band-playing!

The rain was falling; but what mattered the rain now! Sergeant Ritchie threw his kit across his shoulder, and strode off magnificently to his camp at Pont-de-Briques, five miles away. Here, having been appointed to be sergeant in charge of transport and labour, he applied himself with fresh zeal to these duties. Demobilisation camps were being hurriedly erected about ten miles distant from Pont-de-Briques, and the building materials for these had to be conveyed to the site of the camps by means of motor lorries. Sergeant Ritchie's work was now to superintend the squads of German prisoners who were sent every morning from the prisoners' internment camp to load the eighty or one hundred lorries employed on the work. Three trips these vehicles made every day, and thrice a day the sergeant saw to them being loaded with timber, slag, cement, water pipes, and drain pipes.

At last, on 24th February 1919, there arrived the order to set the sergeant free from duty. He then reported himself to the C.R.E. "We can't let you away yet," protested that gentleman; "will you not take on for another four years?" The sergeant was obdurate. He felt that the time had now clearly come for him to retire from army life, so he insisted on his discharge.

We are glad to add that before he left Pont-de-Briques there was a smoking concert held at the

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sergeants' mess, at which Sergeant Ritchie was presented by his brethren with a gold-mounted pipe, a tobacco pouch, and a leather letter case. The following is the letter which accompanied the gifts:—

52nd A.W. Coy., R.E.
R.E. Warrant and Non-Commissioned Officers'
Mess, France.

Presented to Sergeant P. RITCHIE, R.E.,
by the under-mentioned members, in recognition
of his services during his membership in the
above Mess.

[Then follow sixteen signatures.]

W. E. OXLAND,
A/Pres. R.E. N.C.O.'s Mess.

22/2/19.

So with the good wishes of his comrades and his superiors Sergeant Ritchie set his face for home. He had still four days of demobilisation formalities to fulfil in France; he had a final and impatient delay in ridding himself of his equipment at Kinross; then he could take a deep breath, for he was once more a free man! He says that never in all his life did our river and our Tay Bridge look so fair in his eyes as on that good day, the 1st March 1919.

Now Peter is happy and contented at his old work. He has an interest in the football field and the masonic lodge, but he counts it his chief pleasure to devote himself to the welfare and happiness of his family circle. As for these past years of war, Peter has the satisfaction of knowing that he has done a big day's work in the managing of camps and in the drilling of recruits for the British Army.

COLIN D. SMITH

(AGED 19),

PRIVATE (316368), 13TH SCOTTISH HORSE BATTALION, THE BLACK WATCH.

COLIN SMITH, lithographer, is still an apprentice. His time of training (with the usual allowance for the years he was in the army) will not be completed until March 1921. The fact of his brother being a printer may have been the reason why Colin was sent to our office in April 1912.

Colin went early to the army—in 1915. We asked him whether it was his sense of duty or the love of adventure that took him away, and with a smile he replied—"I suppose it was partly both." He remembers that he read in the *Courier* an advertisement stating that a recruiting office of the Scottish Horse had been opened to receive recruits at the Unionist Rooms, Murraygate. The advertisement concluded—"Men of good height and of good character only need apply," and Colin judged that this was meant for him. He had had no previous experience of any form of drill; he had not even been in a Boys' Brigade. He had always had a fancy for horses, but had never handled one, nor had he ever rode on one. Many of his youthful friends having already enlisted in the Dundee Artillery, Colin was alone when he went to the recruiting office, where he was informed as to the pay and the attractions of the service. The sergeant filled up some forms, and took him along to a certain J.P.'s office in Panmure Street to be sworn into the British Army. Colin tells us that this J.P. (an honoured linen manufacturer) shook hands with him and wished him luck. That very night Colin was at

the doctor's in Airlie Place, where he was examined and weighed and measured and passed. This busy doctor also took time to shake hands with the lad and to wish him all good fortune. Two days were now allowed to Colin to put his affairs in order and to say his farewells; then on 4th June 1915, wearing an old suit of clothes as he had been instructed, and carrying with him his shaving tackle, and a knife, fork, and spoon, he took train for Dunkeld.

At Perth Colin struck up acquaintance with four youths from Edinburgh, who were bound for the same destination. When the train reached Dunkeld the five lads walked together to Inver Park, where the 3rd line of the Scottish Horse was then being formed. Army organisation was not in a very forward state in those days, so when Colin came to Inver Park he found only a number of temporary huts and a long open shed running down one side of the field. By inquiry he came into touch with the quartermaster-sergeant, who sent him to report himself at the headquarters office in Birnam and to pass the doctor at the armoury in Dunkeld. The doctor was busy at that very moment passing recruits, and he was allowing no doubtful material to slip through his fingers. Any young man under the influence of liquor—and there were many such—straightway received his discharge form, endorsed with the words —“Not likely to become an efficient cavalry soldier.” As our Colin was not one of these, he was duly passed by the doctor and sent to Inver Camp to arrange about his sleeping accommodation.

Back then he went to Inver. The sergeant now supplied him with three blankets and a waterproof sheet, pointed out a vacant spot in the long open wooden shed (which turned out to be the sleeping quarters of the recruits), and instructed him to mark the spot as his own by laying down upon the bare



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ground his bedding, with something of his own personal property on top, so that he might know the place.

Now that was all right for bedtime, but as our boy had as yet had no food, he was again sent over to Dunkeld to the old Drill Hall, which served as a mess room. There he received his first army meal—a bowl of mince—which he supped with his own spoon. He enjoyed the food, and was thankful for his mercies.

The afternoon Colin spent in walking along the banks of the river Tay with two new comrades. At 4.30 he returned to the mess room for tea, where there was now a big squad of recruits to sit down with him at the nine or ten tables. A mess orderly brought a dixie full of tea to the end of each table, and the boys passed their mugs along to be dipped in the dixie and returned to them. There were no plates. Each man received in his open hand three great thick slices of bread and a hearty chunk of cheese. Colin did not manage to eat all his bread that day, but the fellows who had been in Inver for a few days caused their rations to disappear in quick style.

At 9.30 the bugle sounded "First post." The men were formed up, two deep; the sergeant-major called the roll, and dismissed them—to bed. Now Colin had his first experience of sleeping in the open-air, for the long wooden shed which ran down one side of the park was entirely open in front. "How many men slept there?" we asked him. "Two hundred men," he replied, "side by side, in one long row. We all slept in pairs, as it were. Each of us had one waterproof sheet and three big blankets, so a pair of pals laid down their two waterproof sheets side by side, then they had two of their blankets beneath them, and four blankets above them tucked in at the sides to keep them warm." By and by the bugle sounded "Lights out"; the boys extinguished their own humble

candles and lamps, and silence and darkness reigned over Inver Camp.

Next day the lads were informed that they must meantime wear their civilian clothes, as no uniforms had yet come forward, but for doing this they would be entitled to an allowance for wear and tear. There were no rifles either, and no horses, so our recruits had an easy time. The rifles being the first to arrive, the lads were taught, as their first exercises, to "shoulder arms," and to salute their officers.

After about a fortnight the recruits were lined up for the choosing of a draft of the tallest of them to be sent to Aldershot for training. At this selecting process one of the boys, who had come from some remote place in the far north, made a little mistake. He took his stand among the T's when the lads were ordered to line up in alphabetical order.

"What's your name?" asked the sergeant.

"Tom Anderson," replied the boy.

"Why are you here then? You'd better get up among the A's."

"No," replied the lad; "my name's TOM!"

Colin remembers that, when this same lad came down with the draft to Devonport, Tom was speechless with amazement at his first sight of the great sea and the big ships sailing thereon!

Colin, who was one of the selected draft, recalls that the officer told them they were not going to Aldershot for a picnic, but for hard training. They now received their kit and uniform: tunic and breeches, a pair of slacks for stable work, Balmoral cap, spurs, bandolier, big cavalry coat, two pairs boots, usual small kit, and kit bag.

A day or two thereafter, in the bright June sunshine, see our draft of 140 men, each with his bag upon his shoulder and his rifle at the "short trail," marching from Inver Park to the railway station. There is no

band to escort them along the road, but the boys are in exuberant spirits, and they make the air ring with their shouting and singing and whistling. A special troop train is in waiting, and the people of Dunkeld gather in crowds to give the lads a good send-off, loading them with tokens of kindness—books, papers, cigarettes, chocolates, and good wishes for their success and for a safe and speedy return. The major also comes to the station to wish them luck, and expresses the hope that the lads will succeed well in their course of training at Aldershot.

At Perth the draft is met with an ovation of cheering from the crowd assembled at the station, and again a shower of kind gifts is pressed upon the lads—tea and chocolate and cigarettes. At Carlisle the whole population, apparently, has crowded on the platform. Here again there is tea, with singing and shouting and melodeons and dancing. “Oh, it was great fun going down!” says Colin.

At Exeter, next, there is waiting for every man a mince pie, with a cup of tea, a bag of cakes, and a message printed upon the card which accompanies the gifts—“With compliments from the Mayor and Mayoress of Exeter!” It was a touch of human kindness which sent the boys away in cheerfulness and good courage!

The draft reached Aldershot in the early morning, and the lads, still in high spirits, marched through the sleeping streets with singing and whistling and blowing of mouth organs. The inhabitants all jumped out of bed at the sound, and pulled up their windows to wave a welcome to the new arrivals.

At the barracks Colin was comfortably housed in the married men’s quarters of the 2nd Dragoon Guards. The rooms, each accommodating five men, were similar to those of ordinary tenements, and were provided with fire, gas, water, and all conveniences. Blankets, neatly

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folded, were disposed in readiness upon the floor, and Colin and his pal, having selected each his couch, lay down upon the floor to try to win an hour or two of sleep ere the bugle should call them to the new experiences awaiting them.

Reveille at 5.30 summoned the Guards to rise and dress, and again at six o'clock to "Fall in for roll call." Our recruits were directed to stand aside for the moment, then to follow the Guards to the stables, to watch them cleaning out the stalls and watering and feeding the horses.

At 7.30 the bugle sounded for breakfast, which was served in the verandah at small tables, seated for three men at each side. The meal commenced with porridge and syrup, "but none of us could take it," Colin says, "because we had been accustomed to milk at home!" Tea and kippers followed the unwelcome dish, however, and the lads took a hearty breakfast.

At ten o'clock our recruits were again sent with the guardsmen to the stables, to receive their first lesson in grooming the horses and in general stable work. Then at 12.30 they sat down to the best dinner they had had since joining the army—a stew with potatoes and cabbage, and a custard pudding with milk and pineapple chunks. In the afternoon they received their new rifles. This was a lengthy proceeding, as the rifles were all numbered, and these numbers had to be registered with the names of the recipients.

Next morning after roll-call parade, the recruits were cheered with a cup of coffee and a biscuit, before setting out to the morning's stable work. Our lad was at first rather shy of touching the horses, but he was interested to see how the guardsmen handled them, and to observe how obedient the animals were.

After breakfast, Colin and his comrades were each presented with a horse, and were shown how to saddle it and how to mount it. Our cavaliers then, bolder

in appearance than they felt at heart, rode without accident to the riding school—a building like a large circus. In the centre of the ring stood the riding-master, a tall major, with a whip in his hand. He proceeded at once to put our trembling riders through their paces, making the horses trot or canter or gallop at his pleasure by the crack of his long whip. “How did you manage?” we asked Colin. “Oh,” said he, “we managed all right; none of us fell off that day. I was put into the ‘second class ride.’ It was a big brown chestnut I rode that day, and the same horse was given to me for the whole of the first week, so that the pair of us might learn to know each other. We recruits soon learned that the more kindly you treat your horse the better will your horse behave to you. Some of us used to take lumps of sugar to the stable to give to our horses. One of the old soldiers had such an affection for his steed that he used to sleep in the stable beside its stall. We were a bit shaky at the grooming to begin with, and even frightened to go into the stall beside the horse, but that feeling soon wore off.”

In the afternoons the recruits and guardsmen used to go back to the stable to do the “wispings.” This meant rubbing down the horses with a handful of damp straw, which put a fine gloss on the horse’s coat. At nights a stable guard was on duty to give the animals their last feed, and to see that everything was right.

For a week the lessons in riding were given in the riding school to the crack of the master’s whip—round and round until every lad was made to be like a part of the steed which he rode, moving with its body up and down and forward without the least symptom of jerkiness or awkwardness. Then came another nerve-trying experience—the “jumps.” Trestles one foot high having been placed in the centre of the ring, the

major with his whip made our boys go through the (to them) dreadful performance. One by one they were compelled to jump the obstructions, but they all managed to do it—or rather, perhaps, the horses did it. This they practised until they could skip over the trestles without a tremor.

In time our “ride” of perhaps forty youths was taken out to the “long valley”—the cavalry’s training ground. Here the riding instructor of the Dragoon Guards took charge of the troop, and with forceful language and stentorian lungs he hammered the class through the first stages of cavalry drill. To these raw recruits the evolutions seemed to be more complicated than infantry drill, but they soon found that most of the horses themselves knew what was wanted of them. “Some of the animals,” says Colin, “seemed to know the commands of the instructor about as well as we did, and they ‘Formed troop,’ ‘Circled right,’ or ‘Circled left’ without any difficulty. Some horses, however, were stubborn or stupid, and these caused no little trouble and vexation to their riders.”

“What is a ‘troop’? or a ‘squadron’?” we asked Colin. He told us that there are thirty-three men in a troop, four troops in a squadron, four squadrons in a regiment, and four regiments in a brigade—about 2000 in all. We shall have to be careful hereafter as to which of these words we employ.

“How did the instructor get you all to know what he wished you to do? Was his voice strong enough to ring over the whole troop?”

“Not exactly,” said Colin. “He first led the troop in a ‘Follow-my-leader’ sort of way, then he called ‘Halt,’ while he himself took up his position in the middle; then with a ‘Left turn’ he closed the whole forty of us around him in a great circle for his lecture.”

One thing he strove specially to impress upon the

mind of every recruit—never to dismount without taking his rifle with him. Never under any circumstances must he omit to do this. Before dismounting, he must take his rifle out of its sheath and jump down with it in his hand. Six times and more the master stamped this rule upon his scholars. Then when the horsemen cantered back to barracks, and when the master gave the order to “dismount,” Colin dropped to the ground and—*left his rifle on his horse’s back!* The rebuke of that riding-master was by no means gentle, and not at all polite!

Riding lessons became stiffer and feats of horsemanship more daring as the days went by. Fences and ditches now took the place of the one-foot wooden trestles. Colin tells that one day at the “brigade jumps” a chap in leaping over a rather high wooden beam and a $2\frac{1}{2}$ -foot hedge with a ditch at the back of it, made some error in his calculation of distance and fell, both he and his horse. Was he killed? What did the instructor say, think you?—“Never mind the man,” he shouted, “see if the horse is all right! You pay £50 or £60 for a horse, but you can get a man any day for a shilling!”

Colin has vivid memories of what was called the “lane jump.” “After you rode forward some ten yards,” he says, “there was a wooden beam one foot high to clear, followed by a jump up to a platform about the height of a table and down again, then over a two-foot hedge, and lastly over a ditch.” Colin tells us that on one occasion the last man of the troop managed to negotiate the first three obstructions, but his horse slipped into the ditch, threw its rider against the revetting hedge, and made off on its own account. When the luckless rider was able to rise he was mortified to find that his trusty sword in its metal sheath had been bent, like—*a stick of toffee!*

In the middle of November, after a draft leave to

bid his friends farewell, Colin with his comrades embarked at Devonport on the "Kinfauns Castle." They were marched up the gangway in single file, they were led to their messrooms down below, and they were shown their hammocks lying on the floor and the hooks in the ceiling from which these hammocks were to be slung. Then they had dinner of hot potatoes and bully beef, and their ship went sailing forth upon her voyage to Gallipoli, for that was to be the dread destination of our Scottish horsemen.

Colin and his friends had some boisterous fun that night in trying to board their hammocks. "If you don't fix up the hammock properly," he says, "and if you put your foot clumsily into it, the awkward thing wheels round and throws you out on the floor."

Next day the lads had lifeboat and lifebelt drill. They were told that the torpedo warning would be three short blasts on the siren, and they were instructed which of the ship's boats each man was to run for on the signal, and how he was to take his station. They had all to be ready for danger at any and every moment. Their lifebelt was to lie in their hammock; it was to be their pillow when they laid themselves down to sleep. About an hour after the lads had received this lecture the siren blew its three short blasts. Instantly every man on board the great transport flew to his appointed post. The commanding officer and the captain of the vessel came round to see that all was in order, and the men then knew that the signal had been for practice only. Every few hours all that day the same proceeding was repeated, until the men were fully versed in their duties.

Colin saw much to interest him on this his first long voyage. He saw the Bay of Biscay, with its troubled waters. Most of the men were sick, and at the mess table, he says with a smile, there were very few diners. As he himself was not sick, he, along with a few other

hungry fellows, rather enjoyed this state of affairs! He saw Gibraltar, which the vessel only touched in passing. He saw Algiers at a distance, and by night he gazed in wonder at the gleaming phosphorescence of the waves. He saw Malta, too, especially its great, painted sign of "W. D. & H. O. Wills' Tobacco Factory," which drew his thoughts yearningly after "Woodbines."

From Malta the "Kinfauns Castle" steamed across to the island of Mudros in Lemnos Bay, where our boys listened with awe to the thundering of the guns at the Dardanelles. At that time the 1st Line of the Scottish Horse was quartered on Suvla Bay, and our 3rd Line draft was intended to be a reserve from which to fill up the blanks in their ranks. "We had no thought in those days," says Colin, "of a retiral from the Gallipoli Peninsula. We had all taken a long farewell of our friends at home, for we felt that we were going into a death-trap."

At Mudros our draft was taken in charge by an officer of the 1st Line, and was put under canvas to await further orders. The cavalry swords were now taken from them and replaced by the Webb infantry equipment. Colin explains to us that this Webb equipment consists of two shoulder straps, to which are attached the ammunition pouches (five pouches on each side, fifteen rounds in each = 150 rounds in all), haversack for small articles, water bottle, bayonet, trenching tool, also buckles for attaching valise or kit pack. With this load the boys were set to infantry drill practice in dummy trenches, so that they might be ready to relieve their 1st Line on the Dardanelles.

The draft next had a visit from the brigadier, who welcomed them to the field of action, and informed them that when the 1st Line came out of the trenches the new men would join them, and the whole regiment would then sail to Egypt as cavalry.

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Again Colin and his comrades buckled on their bandoliers and spurs and swords in place of the distasteful infantry pack, and that night the camp was joyful in the prospect of a welcome change. Next morning the outlook darkened for the draft of 140 men. They were summoned in all haste to the Dardanelles, their cavalry equipment was again exchanged for the Webb infantry harness, and they were marched aboard a couple of small paddle steamers which used to ply between Mudros and Suvla Bay. On marching up the gangway Colin could not but notice that one-half of the ship's bridge and one-half of the mast had been blown away in some former brush with the enemy.

Late in the afternoon the steamers paddled off on their dangerous passage, and in the darkness of night they slowly floated into the placid waters of Suvla Bay. Before them now was the ill-starred beach on which so many of our bravest lads, home troops and colonials, had already laid down their lives. Suddenly a signal flashed from the broken bridge, to be answered by signals from the shore. The steamer stopped its engines, the lighters came floating up alongside, and our boys, in dead silence save for the loud beating of their hearts, went marching over the gangway into the lighter, and packed themselves down below in the darkness of the hold. They were only half a mile from the beach, so it was not long till they felt the grounding of the boat upon the sand. A guide was waiting to lead the lads up to the trenches. He informed them that as their 1st Line was at that time in the reserve trenches they would find themselves fairly safe and comfortable to begin with. In the darkness they followed their guide up the hill, but even the darkness could not hide from their eyes the wooden crosses which were scattered to right and left all along the road and all over the hillside. It was the first time, Colin tells us, that he felt the

seriousness of the work to which he had set his hand. By and by, when the party had gone pretty far up the narrow road, they heard a hissing and a whistling in the air above them, which they innocently judged would be the singing of the telegraph wires—so little did these youths know of war and its ways—for the whistling was none other than the flight of bullets sent out from unfriendly rifles. There was no shell fire at this time, for the Turks did not often fire their big guns by night lest they should betray their positions and bring down upon themselves the fire of our naval boats.

The boys all reached the reserve trenches in safety. They were at once allocated amongst the various dug-outs, and they were given a cup of tea, which they enjoyed, such as it was. Now, what sort of a place had they come to, think you? Not huts, nor even tents—only mudholes! ankle deep in wet red mud, and dug-outs scooped from the sides of these mudholes, for shelter from the weather and for protection from Turkish shot and shell. Some days before there had been heavy rains, which had flooded the trenches and dugouts, and had even washed some of these away. As a consequence of the wet weather many of the soldiers had been sent to hospital with colds, trench feet, or influenza, and now our draft had been brought forward to fill the blanks in the line.

On the morrow Colin and his comrades were set to the work of clearing the trenches and repairing the damage caused by the flooding. They got their first taste of shell fire now, for if the Turks were not disposed to fire by night they did not spare their shells by day. Colin and a friend rigged up a waterproof sheet over their own dug-out, and here they crouched and listened to the showers of earth pattering upon their frail ceiling after the explosions of the bursting shells.

There was a first aid post in the trenches, where the

doctor treated and bandaged the wounded men before sending them down by night to the field hospital on the beach. The hospital was marked with a prominent red cross, which the Turks were always careful not to shell. On one occasion, the Turks, suspecting that our people were making this part of the beach a convenient place for the landing of ammunition, sent notice that the hospital must be cleared within twenty-four hours.

The Turks also were honourable enough never to fire upon a hospital ship. Colin was particularly struck with this when four of our big cruisers and five monitors sailed close to the beach and commenced to shell the Turkish positions. The firing was terrific, and the Turks were not slow to reply with thunder for thunder and shock for shock. The cruisers were the first to leave the scene. What was Colin's surprise to see that the Turks at once ceased fire lest they should do injury to a couple of hospital ships which had meantime come sailing into the bay.

In the trenches Colin felt himself to be wonderfully safe. He soon learned that, for his own safety, he must keep his head low. He learned also to distinguish the sounds of the flying shells—whether a shell was coming his way, or whether it was going far beyond him. The firing being mostly directed to the beach, Colin used to shiver when he looked upon the fearful shelling which was devastating the shore. It was the custom for rations to be landed on the beach under cover of night, and to be brought up to the trenches in the gharries or carts of the Indian transport. On one occasion Colin noticed that an Indian gharry or cart had been left standing near his trench. The Turks also caught sight of it, believed it to be a gun or gun carriage, and straightway they shelled it terrifically, smashing up the trenches all around.

Colin Smith was three weeks in the trenches—three

weeks of exposure and endurance. He describes to us that the trenches were made in zig-zag shape, and that at some points the Turks were only fifty yards distant from our line. Indeed, where a sap ran out from the trench, as the distance was only fifteen yards, our boys could even hear the Turks talking. Colin tells us, with a smile, that this proximity of the enemy led to a few laughable mistakes. When he (or one of his comrades) happened to lose his way amid the intricacies of the barbed wire entanglements and to stumble among the Lovat Scouts, who were wearing their cap comforters, and who were speaking their incomprehensible Gaelic jargon, he started with fright, for he felt that now of a surety he had fallen among the—*Turks!*

Colin took part in the historic evacuation of Suvla Bay on 20th December 1915. In preparation for this movement orders were received to destroy all stores. Trench boots were cut up to render them useless, boxes of bully beef were spiked with the bayonet, and all other eatables were destroyed. Colin was one of the first party who vacated the positions and marched down to the beach. The other companies followed, until the whole of the men were taken off the shore in small paddle boats. Everything worked like clockwork. In order that the Turks might not suspect what was going on, fires were left burning in the trenches, and "iron rations" were sent up by the naval boats as if an attack were in preparation. The last men to leave the shore set fire to the accumulation of stores upon the beach, so it was in the ruddy glare of a great conflagration that our lads sailed away from the ill-fated strand of Sulva Bay.

From Gallipoli to Imbross for mails, to Mudros for more letters and parcels, then off the vessel sailed to Alexandria, where our battalion of some 900 horsemen arrived about the New Year. They were quartered in Sidi Bishr, but after a fortnight they were removed

to Mena Camp, about two and a half miles out of Cairo. Here the battalion was strengthened by a draft of four hundred recruits from England. Mena Camp being situated just below the Pyramids, Colin had the good fortune to see these great monuments, one of The Seven Wonders of the World! The climbing of one of them, he says, gave him the surprise of his life. He and five other boys (most of them from Dundee) set out to go to the top of the Pyramid, thinking that this would require as little effort as to walk to the top of the Dundee Law. They found, however, that every stone of the Pyramid was of an "awful size," as high as a table, and that there were hundreds of these tables to be clambered over before they reached the summit, where an enterprising Egyptian was ready to supply them with tea and cakes if they so desired.

The view from the top repaid the lads for all their exertions. The city of Cairo lay at their feet, and the river Nile stretched away into the far distance. Particularly interesting it was to note along the edge of the river the green strip of cultivated land—The Land of Egypt, which contrasted so vividly with the limitless desert of yellow sand around it.

At Mena, Colin was amazed to see the boldness of the hawks or vultures which haunted the camp. "If you throw up a piece of beef into the air," he says, "a hawk will seize it with its talons in mid air. If you lay the meat in a plate on the table, the bird will again swoop down and carry off the meat in its claws."

After a few weeks at Mena, the boys, having been again inoculated and vaccinated, were sent by train along the Suez Canal to El Kantara. Here they were stationed for a month. They had two hundred artillery horses to look after, but there was little satisfaction in the work, for eight or ten of these horses died every day from sand colic.

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The Scottish Horse, about 1,300 strong, were next marched up the desert to Hill 70, where they went into camp, under canvas, for a fortnight. The Royal Engineers were there too, with their barbed wire and other stores, as well as some other branches of the service. At this camp, Colin saw something of the desert, and of the creatures that dwell therein.

The scorpions, for instance, used to crawl in beneath the blankets, their bite causing a swelling larger than would be caused by the sting of a bee.

The sand lizards (or *poissons de sable*) were favourites with the boys. These pretty little creatures, yellow in colour like the sand, and covered with beautiful markings like the scales of a fish, were nimble in their movements, and the lads had some fun trying to catch them ere they could disappear into the sand.

Colin tells us he once saw a great transport column of no fewer than 3,000 camels, striding along proudly, two abreast, bearing enormous loads upon their backs—loads of boxes of bully beef and other supplies for the troops in the desert.

The human beings who lived and moved in the desert our boy could only gaze at in silent wonder, they were so strange, unwashed and unkempt—a race of creatures different from any he had ever seen. The head of the family always rode on his ass; the wife or wives trudged behind their lord, bearing the burdens of the household.

At Hill 70 there was a big Y.M.C.A. hut, with comforts and concerts for the men. There was a very good padre too, who made himself a general favourite. “He was just like a father to us,” says Colin, “he was so good and kind and frank with the boys. When any place happened to be mentioned, he was always ready to tell us the whole history of it. He gave us much information about the wars that had taken place in Egypt in other days. On Sabbath evenings we used to go to

his church service. He sometimes held services also in our mess huts."

From Hill 70 the Scottish Horse journeyed in the truck railway up to the railhead, and thence they marched to camp beside the Royal Scots at Mohammedeah, on the Sinai Peninsula. Here they were employed in the digging of front line trenches for the protection of the Suez Canal. "It was an awful job," says Colin, "for the sides of the trenches had to be revetted with reinforcement wire netting filled in with sand bags, otherwise the sand would never have held up."

The scarcity of water caused the lads more suffering than anything else. At the time when they left Hill 70 their water ration had been reduced to one bottle or two pints per day, and when they reached the railhead a boy could get no tea unless he gave up his precious pint of water. But at Mohammedeah the lads experienced to the full what is meant by the horrors of thirst. Some of them drank off their water ration right away and had to suffer for it afterwards, others gave their ration to make tea; others to make a stew with their bully beef. For four of the days, with the temperature at 129° in the shade, they were obliged to exist on half a cupful of water per man per day. Colin says, "It was an awful experience. Many of the boys had to be sent back to hospital, and many of them became insane. The wind was blowing, but it was a wind that would choke you. I lay most of the day in the tent, trying to keep down the pangs of thirst with the handle of an iron corkscrew in my mouth. Thirst quenchers were tried, but they made us worse rather than better. There are many boys now in Dundee who will never forget those dreadful days. There was a water tank near by, with some precious water in it, certainly, but a guard was set to watch it, and if a man was found tampering with the water, his punishment was 'two years.'"

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Every day the lads were paraded and were marched across the sand to Tineh Bay for bathing. Some poor boys were so frantic with thirst that they used to jump into the salt water and swallow it. "We would do anything," says Colin; "we were so thirsty. Some boys when they received their ration of a half-cupful became silly and—*threw it on the sand!*"

A sandstorm too, was added to the torments of this awful place. One day the order was passed round to take refuge in the tents, to lace up the doorways, to sandbag down all the flaps, and to hold up the pole. The blast came and in spite of all precautions it was strong enough to lay a few of the tents flat upon the ground. Colin mentions that all the men, while in this part of the country, were required to wear sand-glasses. He tells us also that although Mohammedeah is only associated in his mind with the tortures of thirst, he has the satisfaction of knowing that before he left Egypt the camp had been made one of the best in the country, and had been provided with a canteen where the soldiers could buy tinned fruit or anything they might wish.

The enemy made no appearance at Mohammedeah, but he had been approaching. He was seen by our aeroplanes while he was yet in the desert at El Katie. The English regiments were therefore well prepared for him when he made his great attack on them at Romania. The Scottish Horsemen were in readiness also, at Hill 40, and they listened with excited eagerness to the sound of the guns in the distance, although they were not called to help in the battle. The Turks were defeated, and over a thousand of them were made prisoners. When Colin saw these men being brought in, he felt heartily sorry for them, they looked so miserably poor and wretched. Thirty miles they had tramped over the desert, toiling all the way with their heavy howitzers. Colin thinks they used short

lengths of railway to bring up these heavy guns, moving forward laboriously each stretch of railway as the guns were brought another stage onward.

The Scottish Horse were now withdrawn to El Kantara for a few days, then to Mena Camp, Cairo, for some weeks. As the battalion had received infantry training while they were stationed at Hill 40, the boys were not surprised when they heard that they were now to be transformed into the 13th Scottish Horse Battalion, Black Watch, and that they were to be shipped to Salonica.

To Alexandria, first, they sailed, in November 1916, then, with a fairly smooth voyage of a couple of days, to Salonica. Here the boys spent a night of pouring rain in Summerhill Camp, and next morning they began their long march to the battle front in the Struma Valley. They were laden with full winter kit, weighing nearly ninety pounds, and the roads were fearfully steep, but with their first day's tramp they managed to reach the 25-kilo. resting place, where tents were awaiting them. After a few more days on the march they crossed the last of the mountains, descended into the plain, passed over the river Struma, and relieved the Royal Scots at places called Hristian Kamila and Homondos. Here they had a fairly quiet time, so far as warfare was concerned, for the Bulgarians were not disposed to make direct attacks, but limited their activities to artillery shelling. Our boys' duties consisted in protecting the Seres-Salonica railway. They found that their most dangerous work was the forty-eight hours' shifts in the outlying posts along the line, where they were often subjected to heavy shell fire.

Colin tells us of one little adventure in which he played his part. It was planned to make a raid on a small Bulgarian post which was interfering with the line of railway, and it was hoped to make a capture

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of the six or seven Bulgarians who were guarding the place. Scouts therefore were sent out during the day-time to ascertain the exact situation of the post. Then at night one platoon set out to make its way round to the back of the Bulgarians and another platoon prepared to attack them in front. Colin will never forget the eerie feeling which came over him as in the darkness he crept stealthily up one bank of the railway, down the other bank, then along a sunken road to Kavakli wood. Suddenly there rang out upon the night a solitary shout—"Stoi!" (halt!). Then followed the wild rush of men hither and thither, the firing of rifles, and the splashing of water as the Bulgarians made for the marshes. Our plans miscarried to some extent, for the scout had led our first platoon upon the post before the second platoon had got into position. Only one little fellow was captured, but not before he had wounded some of his captors.

A grim, dreary, depressing kind of life our boys lived on the Struma. At Bala, for instance, their daily rations consisted of only a one-pound tin of bully beef to every three men, along with two biscuits and a small piece of cheese to each man. For three long months this meagre fare continued, as the road by which the supplies had to be brought up was impassable. There were no cigarettes either all these three months, a deprivation which seemed to the boys to be worse than the scarcity of food. Colin saw one old soldier picking leaves from a tobacco plant, drying them over the brazier, and then sprinkling them with his rum ration, so that he might have the pleasure of a smoke.

But were there no humanising, elevating influences round these boys of ours on the river Struma? No, scarcely any. There were not even parcels from home. The lack of these the lads felt very keenly. There was a good minister, indeed, who used to come up sometimes from Stavros. He often spoke about Macedonia,

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and he told the boys Bible stories associated with the neighbourhood. There was a small Y.M.C.A. canteen, too, to which the lads went sometimes to buy cigarettes, but it was too far back from the line to be of much service as a social centre. There was also a concert party entitled "The Struma Follies," who used to tour round the different regiments to give them an evening's entertainment on some hastily improvised stage. In spite of these little varieties, however, the boys found themselves to be strangely low-spirited on the Struma. Two or three of them went quite out of their mind and shot themselves. The doctor came up to Bala to warn the lads of the danger of malarial fever from the marshes, and from the bites of the mosquitoes. Quinine was issued daily to ward off the dread disease. Mosquito nets, to be worn over the helmet and tucked underneath the tunic, were supplied to all the men. Gloves, drawn up over the sleeves of the tunic, were ordered to be worn. Puttees were wrapped over the breeches. When the boys were thus arrayed it seemed as though it would be an utter impossibility for any insect to reach them.

Colin says that the first flight of the mosquitoes came off at 7 P.M., the second flight at 9 P.M., after which the buzzing continued the whole night. So loud was the buzzing that Colin had difficulty in hearing what the boy next to him was saying.

When the malaria season had fairly begun the British line was withdrawn from the plain, and the Bulgarians had the glory of advancing to occupy the ground which we had vacated. After some months this piece of country had to be retaken from the enemy, thus entailing some fighting and loss of life. It was an exciting time for our boy. He tells of one occasion when his battalion made a plan to capture a Bulgarian patrol at one of their points of call, which happened to be the Greek church of Hristian. The first movements were made all right.

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As quiet as mice, the boys made their way through the darkness to their appointed stations. Now at this time our Colin belonged to the M.G. (machine gun) team, whose part of the adventure was to plant the machine gun on the rafters of a barn opposite the church—the gun to look out of a little window and to command the scene below. It was quite overlooked, however, that the rope of the church bell was fixed to the rafters of this barn. So when the corporal of the team, a big, stout lad, was climbing over these beams, didn't his foot hook into this bell rope, and didn't he pull up his foot with all his force, causing the great bell to send forth a mighty warning clang which echoed over the plain, and set all the wild dogs of the neighbourhood a-barking! Colin and his comrades crouched in their hiding places till 9 A.M., but they caught no Bulgarians in their trap that night.

At last Colin was cheered with letters and parcels from his friends at home. One parcel from Willison Church contained a message from his minister telling him what the people at home were thinking about the brave lads who were having such a hard time. "It cheered us all up," says Colin. "We were much in need of something to cheer us. We used to read our letters over and over, not to ourselves only, but also to our pals; and a newspaper!—we read it from the first page to the last, four or five times over, till it fell to pieces."

Malaria now laid its grip on Colin Smith, quinine and mosquito nets notwithstanding. He remembers that one night when he was helping to carry a wounded man to camp, he felt so absolutely dejected and depressed that he stood straight up amid a shower of whistling bullets, hoping that one of these would bring his sufferings to an end. Sickness and shivering and great debility followed; then, of course, there was

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a drive for him in the ambulance to the stationary hospital, where there were beds and comforts and kind nurses. The doctor there saw that his patient was absolutely run down, and he ordered his removal to the Base Hospital at Salonica. Colin happened to be placed on the top stretcher of the motor ambulance, and when he looked out of the window what was his delight to see that it was a Dundee man (Lieut. Willison) who was in charge of the convoy which was speeding him away from all the sufferings and nightmares of the past eighteen months.

To cut a long story short, Colin was partly cured of the malaria, and in a couple of months he was sent home. He planned to give a pleasant surprise to his father and mother and sisters, but his plot, like the plots against the Bulgarians, was not altogether a success, for his folks happened to be out at their minister's semi-jubilee celebrations when he knocked at the door of his own home. He had perforce to lay down his pack and stroll about the Dundee streets till they returned. His mother told him she had been dreaming about him only two nights before—dreaming a dreadful dream that his leg had been blown off by a shell. She could not believe that her boy now stood before her safe and sound. She had even to pinch his arms and legs before she could assure herself that his clothes were not disguising a wooden limb!

Colin had still months of hospital treatment to undergo, for, as the malaria was in his blood, it seized upon him from time to time. Treatment in the Dundee War Hospital and treatment in the St. Andrews V.A.D. Hospital—then he had the best time of all his army life—four months' holiday, golfing every day of it, and living in private billets in Queen's Gardens, St. Andrews.

Once again the army claimed him, and sent him to

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serve in Ireland, where he again received treatment in the Curragh Military Hospital and in Cork Military Hospital. He did not enjoy the months he served in that distressful country, for, he says, "You never were sure who were friends and who were foes."

At the long last, at Ennis, Colin Smith was demobilised, after having been in the army three years and ten months. When he came home this time he planned no more surprises. At his own fire-side there was a party of friends waiting to welcome him, and in that house on that night there was much rejoicing and great thankfulness of heart!

ANDREW TOWNS

(AGED 27),

GUNNER (133693), ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY.

ANDREW TOWNS, compositor, served his apprenticeship with us from the year 1907 to 1914, his schooldays having been passed at Rosebank Public School.

In the early months of the war Andrew was not carried away by the spirit of the times, for he was no lover of militarism; but as the horizon became ever more gloomy and more threatening, his opinions began to modify, and in December 1915, under the Derby Scheme of recruiting, he presented himself at the Albert Hall as a young man ready to go to the service of his country. He was registered and sworn in, then dismissed till further orders.

In the beginning of April 1916 Andrew received his notice summoning him again to the Albert Hall. He appeared, passed his medical inspection A1, and chose as his branch of service the Royal Field Artillery. He was instructed to report himself, some days later, at the Nethergate Recruiting Office, from which he was to start for Maryhill Barracks, Glasgow, the Scottish headquarters of his regiment.

On Friday then, the 9th of April, with the forenoon train, Andrew Towns left home and friends for the tented field. He soon made new acquaintances, for there were two lads in the train who were also booked for the R.F.A. The three youths agreed to spend together their few remaining hours of freedom. On arrival in Glasgow they made their way to the Botanic Gardens, where in the beautiful grounds they



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pleasantly wandered until the setting of the sun gave warning that they must now bethink them of their new home. They accordingly presented themselves at the orderly room of Maryhill Barracks, and handed their papers to the sergeant in charge, who at once led them to their sleeping quarters—a room, comfortable enough, with the usual low trestles and mattresses and blankets. They were offered no hospitality in the way of food, these homeless youths; but they were tired and wearied by this time, and they quickly fell asleep.

Reveille was sounded by the trumpeter at 5.30 next morning, but our lads lay still until 7.30, when a bombardier shouted for the “last-joined recruits to tumble out and go to breakfast!” There were about 150 new recruits that morning, and as each man entered the dining hall he received his plate of bread and meat and his mug of tea.

The lads were now mustered on the barrack square, where their names and all particulars were written down by the clerks, under supervision of the sergeant-major and the orderly officer for the day. Then they were hurried off to the quartermaster’s stores for their equipment. It was a lively scene, for there were at least a dozen men busily engaged in handing over to the recruits the many and varied articles. To each man the usual items—the kit bag, two complete suits of uniform, another suit of overalls for stable work, two pairs boots, three sets of underclothing, and all the small kit articles in addition. There was this amount of mild reasonableness about the proceeding, that the men were invited to step into the “fitting room” adjoining to try on their new clothing, and if a lad found that his tunic, for instance, did not suit him, the quartermaster’s men were pleased to let him have another.

The recruits now retired to their sleeping quarters and commenced to dress in their new regimentals, only

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to be interrupted by a sudden call to parade—a *parade which lasted about five minutes*. The mysterious thing about it was that when our boys returned to their rooms they found that some articles of their cast-off civilian clothing had disappeared! One lad, for instance, failed to find his boots, no matter how carefully he searched for them; another lad was unable to find his jacket. The poor boys, in the excitement of their new surroundings, not knowing what course to pursue, resigned themselves to pack up what was left of their former clothing, and to hand the parcel over to the postal department for dispatch to their old homes.

Saturday afternoon was generally a half-holiday at Maryhill Barracks, but on this first day the new recruits were marched to the medical officer for inoculation before they were freed for the evening. They were required to be back in barracks by tattoo at 10 o'clock; "Lights out" sounded at 10.30.

On Monday morning our recruits rose at reveille and mustered, four deep, upon the barrack square. A sergeant-major marched them off to the gymnasium for a good hour's hard physical training, in order to work off the effects of the inoculation. Forenoon was occupied with marching drill in the grounds, afternoon with packing kits for removal on the morrow.

On Tuesday the lads were paraded with kits complete, trained to Craiglockhart, and marched, in pouring rain, to Redford Barracks, a training centre of the R.F.A.

Here in Redford Barracks for the next ten weeks Andrew Towns had one of the best times of his life. He was housed, with other three youths, in a room of the married quarters, where everything around him was clean and tidy and comfortable. At his first entry, certainly, he was pretty wet with the heavy rain, but didn't he have a dry suit and dry underclothing in his kit bag?

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Soon came the shout—"Fall in, new draft!" at which the recruits mustered and marched for tea to the huge dining hall, where the 51st, 52nd, and 53rd Brigades (say between a thousand and fifteen hundred men), could all sit down together and still leave room to spare. Neat-handed, active orderlies served at the buffet; they handed forth the meat or fish and tea, and the feast proceeded.

After tea our "new draft" had a short lecture from the sergeant-major regarding the rules and discipline of the barracks, the hours of parade, &c. The draft was then divided up into groups of twenty or thirty, each group to be under the charge of a sergeant, who was to be known as "No. 1" of the gun crew.

Andrew Towns now begins to have dim and misty ideas of the constitution and organisation of the life around him. Having been posted to the sub-section of twenty or thirty men under No. 1 in charge, he learns that there are four sections in a battery, A, B, C, and D (or, as the telephonist will name them—Ak, Beer, C, and Don). He learns also that a gun crew nominally consists of ten men. This afternoon, however, No. 1 has only time to tell his pupils when and how to "Fall in," and where their gun park is, when he closes the lesson for the day.

In the morning Andrew and his comrades spring up at reveille (5.30) full of eager anticipation of all the new and wonderful things they are to see and do. They "Fall in" at six, and their first hour of artillery life they spend in the stables, grooming, watering, and feeding the horses. "Were you not afraid," we asked our lad, "to touch the horse?" "No," Andrew confessed, "not at first, till I got a slight kick; then I saw I would have to be a bit careful. At Redford Barracks," he continued, "they broke in the new horses and the new men together—they made only one job of it. Any sort of a horse was put into your hands, so

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if you were not careful, the horse would break you instead of you breaking it."

Stable work over, our lads have a wash and breakfast; then they are off to the gun park for gun drill. For the first time in his life Andrew Towns sees and handles a modern 18-pounder. No. 1 tells him and his mates the names of its various parts—the "piece" (or barrel, as we used to call it); the "breech block," at the loading end, which opens backward, like a door, on a hinge, thus to admit the shell and charge; the "lands," or rifling of the bore, to put a spin upon the shell, and so ensure that it shall fly in a straight line; the "slide," along which the piece recoils until it is stopped and sent back to its place by the "buffer spring"; the "sights"—the "open sight" (wherewith to aim at objects visible to the naked eye), the "telescopic sight" (for distant objects), and the "No. 7 dial sight" (the one generally used in actual warfare, as it does not require that a gunner should see his target, but ensures that each shot shall have a certain relation to the one which preceded it); the "range drum," on the right-hand side of the gun, by which the range can be adjusted from 200 yards to 6000 yards; the "elevating gear," on the left side, worked with a sight chronometer, and regulating the height or depth of a shot; the "firing lever" to fire the gun, actuating a firing pin in the breech block to hit the detonator in the shell; the "spade," or hinder part of the gun, which is flat and sharp like a spade or fish tail, and which, when the gun is once fired, buries itself in the earth on the recoil of the gun, and locks the whole machine firmly and finally to the spot; the "gun carriage" with its wheels and its trunnions, on which the "piece" is pivoted as on an axle; the "gun shield," or steel roof plate, to shelter the gun crew from splinters of the enemy's flying shrapnel; and the "corrector bar," a movable slide hanging up before

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the gunner's eye to remind him to what fuse he must set his time shell.

No. 1 also defines the duties of the men of the gun crew, from No. 1 to No. 10, and instructs the lads where to stand and when to act.

Most interesting work Andrew found it all to be. He was glad that he had not been detailed as a driver, for he felt the morning stable work to be but drudgery, while gun work was scientific and stimulating. Every day there was something new and interesting to learn. "I was always happy," he tells us, "when I was on the guns."

"And what about shooting?" we asked. "Were you allowed to fire the gun?"

"No shooting at this time, no firing practice," he replied; "much of our training was carried on with dummy guns and dummy shells. The first time I ever saw a gun fired was in France."

For about a fortnight this introductory gun work filled up the forenoons of the recruits; their afternoons were devoted to marching drill in the barrack grounds. Then commenced the more scientific lectures by the officers with the help of diagrams.

"Did you receive any lessons in mathematics?" we asked Andrew.

"No," he replied. "The officers must, of course, be acquainted with mathematics, but a gunner will do better if he has a level head, a good judgment, and a little initiative. A man who relies too much on his book and his mathematics is of no use in actual warfare."

After ten weeks of this gun drill, Andrew Towns passed his tests and received a week's embarkation leave, so that he might be ready to leave the country at a moment's notice. In due course came his orders to report at Woolwich, the headquarters of the Royal Artillery, and there, at Brookhill Camp, he waited for

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the final summons. He enjoyed his week in Brookhill, for there were no stable duties for him, no horses, no guns, no lectures—only a pleasant route march in the forenoon and another in the afternoon to keep him in good health. He was particularly struck with the scrupulous cleanliness of the whole camp—sleeping quarters, cookhouse, dining hall, &c. The food, too, was exceptionally good.

On 7th August Andrew and his comrades, escorted by the regimental band, marched to the railway station, trained to Southampton, and embarked in the “May Queen” with a shipload of all classes of the service, together with a sprinkling of New Zealanders. On a lovely starlit night the vessel, with other two transports and an escort of destroyers, steamed across the channel to Le Havre, but the “May Queen,” being behind the other transports, lost the tide, and had to lie outside till next afternoon. The troops then disembarked and marched to Harfleur Camp, where they arrived in the late evening, hot, tired, dusty, and hungry.

Andrew’s first experience of tent life was not at all encouraging, for there were cooped in his small bell tent twenty-two or twenty-four men, who lay side by side like herrings in a barrel, with no room even to turn. But why didn’t he go outside in the warm summer night and sleep under the open sky? “Because,” says Andrew, “we were not allowed to be outside, else we would all have been sleeping in the open air. The only thing we could do was to keep open the flaps of the tent so that we might have air to breathe. Our food too was rough and ready in the extreme, and none of us had any liking for Harfleur Camp.”

Here a week was spent, with parades from morning to night; indeed, it passed into a saying among the men that “there was only one parade a day and that was all day!” There was certainly a pretence of

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gun drill with some permanent guns on the top of the hill, but this was only to keep up appearances. There was such a congestion of troops at Harfleur that the men used to be marched up this hill to perform their gun tests in squads of fifty men at a time, in the space of ten minutes! Then they were retained on the hill doing physical jerks the livelong day, simply to keep them employed.

Each morning at parade the sergeant-major read out the names of the men who were posted for a draft to move up the line, and in time he read the name "Andrew Towns!"

That same day Andrew, with a thousand more, entrained for the Somme front. The journey was not a rapid one, for the train did not appear to be in any hurry. Men jumped to the ground from time to time, and walked alongside their carriage for a little relaxation. Others descended to take a drink of water when a handy pump-well presented itself. Some men rode on the top of the carriages, and when the train trundled through a long smoky tunnel and brought these boys out again into the daylight, looking like chimney-sweeps, they were greeted with roars of boisterous laughter from all the others. This practice of riding outside had to be discontinued, however, for at one point there happened to be a loose telegraph wire which caught a man by the chin and dragged him along the roof of the carriage, to the great danger of his life.

From time to time, when the train stopped to let off some men for the various sectors of the line, the officers used to ask the railwaymen how long would be the delay. It might be five minutes, or it might be five hours—if the latter, a fire was made with biscuit cases or anything that lay to hand, and tea was prepared to cheer the men and to wash down the iron rations on which they had meantime to subsist.

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Everyone was in good humour, in exuberance of spirits—that was the wonderful thing—a case of a man being in the dumps was unknown among all that jolly crew.

Five long days and five long nights this journey lasted, then Andrew with fifty others left the slow coach at Lavieville, a little village near Albert, only ten miles behind our front line of battle. Here unceasingly growled and rumbled in the distance the long line of mighty guns, and once a week, at least, the enemy's "Long Tom" used to send over its great 17-inch shell to wreak destruction in the village or its neighbourhood.

Our lads were first taken to the 15th Divisional Ammunition Column, where for a week they were employed at transport work, and at grooming, watering, and feeding the horses.

Then Andrew Towns was ordered to join the 71st Artillery Brigade, but as yet, be it remembered, he had never seen a gun actually fired. He and nine of his comrades walked—for men must walk, although the shells are bursting round their heads—across the zone of danger to receive their orders from the adjutant of the brigade. Andrew's little party was guided by an officer, who was provided with a reference map showing the positions of the various batteries. Through the town of Albert then they made their way, through the heaps of ruined houses, through the torn and riven and desolated country, some ten miles forward to their destination. The adjutant was downstairs when they called—everybody was downstairs—the ground was a perfect honeycomb of underground habitations, which had been constructed in 1914 by the Germans themselves when they overran this part of the country. The adjutant came upstairs, looked over the new men, and said—"Well, you three men go to A Battery, you two to B, four to C, and one to D."

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Then he detailed a "runner" (or orderly) to guide the lads to their various units.

At that moment there were no shells coming over from the enemy, so the air was pretty safe. Andrew was sent to B Battery, where he was interviewed by the captain, who posted him to a sub-section, and ordered him to report himself as a "duty gunner" to No. 1 of that sub-section, who would install him in his gun crew.

Now Andrew Towns sees the guns at last—four of them—planted in a field, protected overhead by their iron elephant cupolas, sheltered in front and almost covered by a mound of sandbags, which again was camouflaged with grass. Three men are working one of the guns, and to them Andrew is added to make up their number to four. He learns as his first lesson in actual warfare that guns are generally worked by three or four pairs of capable hands, not by a theoretical numbered team of ten, as he had been taught while training. So his anxious memorising of the different duties of Nos. 1 to 10 of a gun crew has all to be thrown aside.

And what does Andrew do, think you, to help these three gunners at their work? He watches their operations for a few rounds, then he begins to make himself generally useful. He observes the number indicated on the corrector bar which hangs from the roof plate, and with one knee on the ground he lays hold of one of the shells which are lying in readiness beside him. With the help of a key he twists the nose of the shell until the indicator of the fuse ring points to the proper figure, then he hands the shell to the man at the loading breach. And who sets the corrector bar to the proper figure, think you? Not any of the three men beside him, certainly. It is an 18-pounder they are working, which throws its projectile full 6000 yards away, and they see not the result of their

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shots. But far ahead in some cranny in the rocks, or sheltering behind some scrap of ruined dwelling, there crouches the officer at the observation post—it is he who sees the target, who sees the spot to which each shell is sent. Under his control is a telephone, which a wire connects with his battery of guns. With a word he can bid them fire or cease to fire, he can order them to raise or lower, he can move them to the right or to the left.

To-day now, what hears our telephonist who sits in his telephone pit in the centre of our battery of guns, his telephone receiver at his ear? What hears he from the officer in his observation post of danger a mile, or two, or three away? Listen!—"Corrector, 140. Range, 2500. Depression, 20 minutes. Report when ready."

Our four gunners bestir themselves to make the necessary adjustments, then our telephonist speaks into his telephone—"No. 1 ready, sir!" And the officer whispers back along the wire—"No. 1—Fire!" or "No. 1—Six rounds rapid fire."

Was Andrew Towns greatly startled when the gun first fired its shell? No, but what surprised him was the lightning speed of the recoil—so violently backward, then forward again before he could wink.

"Must the gun," we asked him, "be aimed afresh for every shot?"

"Not altogether," he replied; "as the spade of the gun has already embedded itself firmly in the ground the gun itself cannot travel backward, but it will require to be slightly readjusted by means of the short traverse handle until the wonderful No. 7 Dial Sight has its aiming point (be it tree or stone or steeple—be it before the gun or behind) focussed exactly upon the crossing of the threads in its eyepiece."

"After your gun had been fired with a pull of the firing lever, what did you do next?" we asked further.

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"What about the sponging of the muzzle and the ramrod and all the rest of it?"

"Oh," he said, "we made use of the ramrod only once a fortnight to clean out the piece with oil. All we had to do after firing was to open the breach with the hand lever, when the empty shell case was automatically ejected, and the breach was ready to receive the next round."

At this advanced gun post, Andrew tells us, there were no houses near by, no sign of life on all the land before him, only some sad heaps of ruins here and there which betokened the sites of former dwellings. The gunners did not live in huts, not even in tents—they crouched upon the earth in lowly bivouacs or even burrowed for themselves a shelter beneath the ground. It was summer-time, however, and Andrew found himself wonderfully comfortable. At nights he gazed in awe and wonder at the marvellous sight before him, for the very heavens were illumined with the frequent star-shells and the bursting shrapnels, while the air was kept in constant reverberation with the unceasing thunder of the artillery.

After a few days' work with the battery, there came the order from Brigade Headquarters—"Move forward to position such and such by 2 o'clock to-morrow morning." A messenger was therefore sent back to the waggon line with instructions to send up horses and drivers at a certain hour to pull out the guns to their new position. This work had, of course, to be done by night, as the moving of the guns had to be concealed from the watchful eyes of the German aeroplanes. It was an exciting time, for six horses yoked to a gun are not easily guided in darkness and on broken ground; but the drivers were used to their work, and they knew that the guns must be properly placed and carefully hidden before the break of day.

Three times in one day Andrew's battery was

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shelled out of its position by the enemy's fire, until the gunners began to suspect that spies were at work around them. At that time there was adopted throughout the whole army a method of screening the guns by covering them with a fishing net supported on four poles. This proved to be an effective means of hiding the guns from the cameras of the aeroplanes.

From now onward Andrew's story is a record of the battles with which the newspapers have made us all more or less familiar. Day and night he lived amid the bursting shells, amid the forward rush and the backward retirement of the tides of battle.

Mametz Wood.—He saw it lost and he saw it taken. His guns were not removed, he says, but the S.O.S. messages from the trenches were very frequent, as at that time there was panic in the very air. It was a difficult place to take.

Bezentin.—His guns were at the taking of the little village. It was sad to look upon the scene after the battle was over. The whole village was an absolute mass of ruins, with hardly one stone left upon another.

High Wood.—He saw it lost and taken time after time, and ere his guns had finished with it there was not a single tree standing. It was at High Wood he first saw the "tanks." Half a dozen of these new machines made their appearance beside his battery one night, and at daybreak they ambled forward among the Germans and fairly demoralised them. Some German soldiers thought that the hideous things were creations of their own disordered brains, "and," says Andrew, "the result was that these men went off their heads altogether." Andrew saw the tanks coming back too at mid-day, not so many of them, alas, as went forward in the morning!

Martinpuich.—"This village was easy to take," he tells us; "our preliminary bombardment was on a more powerful scale than it had been in former days, and it

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was organised and regulated to a nicety. The supply of shells too was abundant. The poor Germans seemed to lose heart altogether and they simply walked out of the village."

"Amid all this fevered atmosphere of battle," we asked Andrew, "was there any element of human kindness or goodness near you? Did you see any Y.M.C.A. men at their work, or did you meet a padre anywhere?"

"Oh, yes," said Andrew; "I saw both. The Y.M.C.A. men used to carry their portable stall right into the danger zone, and I saw them devotedly serving food and hot drinks to the boys. It was most valuable work. As for a padre, we had an uncommonly good one on the Somme, all the way from Mametz Wood to Martinpuich. He was the Presbyterian army chaplain. The lads gave him the nickname of 'Woodbine Charlie,' because he always made his orderly bring along a sand-bag full of cigarettes and pipes and tobacco, and these he distributed all round. He went fearlessly up to the front line, speaking a kindly word to every man he met. He also held meetings when the men were out resting. He did not preach at the men, this padre, he rather gave them good advice and encouraging words, and he became universally beloved."

Andrew wishes us also to mention a certain general whom he saw at Martinpuich. This general, who was well up in years, was almost worshipped by the men. He thought nothing of going forward himself to the front line in order to see exactly what was taking place, and to every man he met, irrespective of rank, he spoke in a friendly, kindly way. If he happened to overtake anyone carrying a heavy load, such as a reel of barbed wire, then this general put his own hand to help the man with his burden. "It was men like him," says Andrew Towns, "who gave us heart to carry on with the work!"

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After the taking of Martinpuich, Andrew's superiors recognised that they had in him an active, intelligent young fellow who could be of more value to them as an orderly at Headquarters than as a labourer working at the back of a gun.

For the next eight months, therefore, he had the responsible duty of conveying messages of confidence and secrecy from Headquarters to the various batteries—messages of too great importance to be entrusted to a telephone wire. A bicycle could be of no use to him in crossing the rough, broken country between the batteries, therefore he must walk, as though he were endowed with the charm of life inviolate, through strafes and barrages and bursting shells. Was he not afraid to walk abroad on duties so extremely perilous? "No," he says, "I was really never nervy. I was always in danger, but I took the shelling as a matter of course. My mind seemed only to feel a kind of curiosity as to where the next burst was to fall."

After the taking of Le Sars, Andrew was sent back to the waggon line for a few days' rest. There it was the custom for the men to take the horses (some thirty of them) every morning to the water trough. On one occasion Andrew happened to be sitting on the back of the last horse in the procession—a fast and fresh bay mare belonging to the sergeant-major. All went in due decorum on the way down to the water, but when the party turned their faces homeward, and the bay mare found herself to be the leader of the cavalcade, she gripped the bit between her teeth, threw off all restraint, and set off at a canter, a run, a wild gallop, with our John Gilpin clinging tightly in the saddle. Roars of boisterous laughter from the drivers only drove his steed the faster, and when at last the animal had run its freshness off a little and when Andrew managed to bring her back to the other horses, the sergeant shouted at him—"Who told you

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to canter?" The other horsemen jestingly called—"How did you like your morning ride?"

Butt of Warlingcourt—This was only a sort of a slag heap which our boys lost and won time and again. Andrew will always remember the place from having witnessed one of the most daring and adventurous raids of the war. It was winter then, and the the snow had been lying on the ground for the past six weeks. Didn't some twenty or thirty of the Gordon Highlanders attire themselves in white smocks, with white painted steel helmets on their heads, and didn't they steal across the dangerous strip of No Man's Land, in the bright moonlight, like—*ghosts*! The enemy was taken completely by surprise. Unobserved the gallant Gordons reached the German trenches, and within an hour they returned in safety, every man of them, bringing seventeen prisoners and some items of valuable information!

Towards the end of January 1917 the whole of the 15th Division trekked to Arras, a town which had suffered much from the shells and bombs of the Germans, although it had never been in their possession. Arras was actually honeycombed with miles upon miles of subterranean passages dug by the French many years before. Along these tunnels (or along the underground sewer-ways) it was possible to walk from the gate of Arras right forward to our front line without once coming above ground. An order having been issued that all men having occasion to move about the town should keep to the underground passages, Andrew in the course of his duties had frequent occasion to take advantage of these interesting tunnels.

From day to day the battle now raged with ever greater intensity from both sides, until, on 9th April, our men made what they called "the Arras push." In preparation for this attack there was great massing of

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artillery on the Arras sector. For three days and nights on end our guns bombarded the enemy's lines, before our infantry were sent forward in the advance. The push was a great success, and the British line was advanced eight miles in a single day. German prisoners told afterwards that their nerves had been shaken by our preliminary bombardment, for during these three days they had been unable to get up either food or water or ammunition.

Successful as was the Arras push, Andrew will remember it rather by the awful disaster which befell his own battery. He relates that his guns had finished their bombardment at 8.30 A.M., that the horses had been harnessed up in order to move the guns forward to a fresh position, and that his whole battery stood in the roadway all day long waiting for orders which failed to come at the time expected. At last, at 7.30 in the evening, the orders arrived and the cavalcade started. At that very moment there fell on that devoted column of guns and ammunition waggons no fewer than three shells from the German guns! There had been six guns to form the battery in the morning — *there were but two of these remaining when the day was done!!* And when the sun again rose to shine upon the earth, there was a borrowing of men from the Divisional Ammunition Column in order to complete the two gun crews, so that the diminished battery might take its place in the battle line as if nothing had happened!

From Arras Andrew was moved up to the other side of Tilloy. "We had a stiff time there," he says; "indeed it was the only time we had to fall back to a safer position. We were working there practically in open action, without any cover or shelter. So hot was the shelling on one occasion that three of the gunners ran back and took cover to save their lives. They were reprimanded for cowardice and were

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ordered again into action. When the guns ceased fire the next time, two of these men were found dead at their post, while the third man had lost his hand!

From Tilloy the battery started on a fortnight's trekking to Ypres. Andrew set forth along with his comrades, but he found himself unable to accompany them further than Frevent, for there, alas, he was stricken down with appendicitis. He was sent to hospital in Frevent for a week, to Boulogne for a week, then to Norwich for an operation. He recovered from the operation, and he judged himself to be on the way to restored health when pneumonia laid its dread hand upon him and claimed him as its prisoner for the next three months.

Andrew will ever treasure as a pleasant memory the manifold kindness he received in Norwich Hospital from nurses, physicians, and visitors—all of whom seemed to vie with one another in showing kindness to the patients.

Discharged from Norwich, Andrew came home on a ten days' leave, after which he was sent to Ripon Convalescent Camp, a crowded establishment where thousands of men who had come out of hospital were drilled and marched into a state of physical fitness.

Three months in Ripon—then Andrew was transferred for the next five months to the old military barracks at Woolwich, a depot he by no means liked. As at that time there happened to be a demand for signallers, Andrew volunteered for this branch of the service, and he thereupon received a course of instruction in the various branches of the art—Morse, semaphore, flag, lamp, and disc. After successfully passing his examinations, he was drafted for overseas, and once more, on the 18th of June 1918, he was shipped to Le Havre. There he was ordered to join a flying column of artillery, 70th Battery.

At Edinifer, on the right of Arras, he found his

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battery, and he soon saw that it was to be a flying unit indeed. The guns were eighteen pounders; they were easily moved—the battery was here to-day and away to-morrow. The Germans were on the move too, backwards; that was the surprising thing to Andrew Towns. Amongst our men, as he tells us, there seemed no longer to be any doubt about the possibility of taking a position from the enemy. Our bombardments and attacks proceeded on a huge scale. Everything worked like clockwork. In former days, when Andrew was on the Somme, progress was slow and advances were measured by yards; now the line went forward by miles—eight miles in a single day! The Royal Field Artillery was operating in relays at the very front, just behind the infantry. One battery fired over the heads of the boys until the advance was made, then another battery moved in front of the first to protect the troops and to keep the Germans on the run. So the tide of battle kept ever surging eastward.

The war finished for Andrew Towns at Maubeuge. "We had backed up the Guards all the way," he says; "then one day we noticed a crowd gathering round a notice which had just then been pinned up at a doorway—a notice proclaiming an 'Armistice'—to take effect next morning at eleven o'clock! It so happened that our battery was out of range at the time, so we were not required to fire our guns again!"

In course of time, orders having come to move into Germany, the batteries, with the infantry in front of them, set out on the eastward trek. There were plenty of horses now, so our signaller rode on horseback all the way—down the valley of the Meuse, to Namur, to Huy, to Charleroi, billeting at nights in barn or school; from Charleroi to Merveaux, and from Merveaux to Malmedy—the first town on the German frontier.

Andrew was curious to see how the German people would behave. "They kept very much out of sight at

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first," he says, "but once they got over their timidity, we found them to be very good people; they were very obliging, and very willing to do anything for our men."

From Malmedy to Duren—there, billeted in the village of Pier, just outside Duren, his guns lying idle in the school playground, Andrew remained until April 1919. During these months he picked up a slight knowledge of the German language, and he tried to converse with his host, the farmer, and with the village schoolmaster. From these men he gathered that the war was none of their making, that war was against their principles, that the working men of Germany had no wish for war, and that the military party alone were to blame for plunging their country into the conflict. Andrew enjoyed the six months he spent under the farmer's roof at Pier. All the people round him did their best to make him feel at home, and never did he observe the least sign of dislike or hostility to the British. Food was evidently very scarce in the little village, and for the gift of a tin of bully beef the Germans overflowed with gratitude. In course of time, however, Andrew noticed that some bacon and butter and cheese and meat began to make their appearance in the shop window.

Andrew was now sent to join another battery at the moor of Elsenborn, near Malmedy. Here he was quartered in the great German artillery barracks, where the living quarters and the stabling accommodation were both of the best. The barracks of Elsenborn were used by our people as a training centre, to which the various batteries were sent in turn for a week's firing practice.

From Elsenborn to Hilden on the Rhine—here a beginning was made with the breaking up of the batteries, and with the selling of the horses to the Germans. Six weeks of an easy holiday life in Hilden,

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with free railway journeys to Cologne when he pleased to take them, with trips in the steamers on the Rhine, with walks round the countryside during the day, and concerts and cafés in the evenings; then our lad received his discharge and a free passage to—Dundee!

Andrew, being somewhat delayed at Ripon with demobilisation formalities, had no opportunity of sending a wire to his friends to tell them when he would arrive, so he made his way home alone, on the morning of the 17th September 1919—unexpected, but not unwelcome! Now no longer frets his wife in anxious foreboding as to what dreadful fate may have befallen her husband, and little Frances sleeps more safely o' nights, seeing that her daddy has helped to save his home and his country from the terrors of a foreign invasion and from the horrors and cruelties of war!

