





THE DIARY OF PRIVATE HERBERT HASLETT  
NO. 5366 22ND BATTALION  
AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE

Transcribed by Elizabeth Crock  
December 2019



To Aunty Moy

The photograph of the Albert Cathedral by Captain G. Wilkins is reproduced on the back cover with thanks to the State Library of Victoria. The drawing of the Cathedral by war artist Will Dyson on the inside rear cover of this book and is reprinted with permission of the Australian War Memorial.

## **Introduction**

Herbert ('Bertie') Haslett was born in 1872 at 1 Emerald Street, Collingwood East, Victoria, Australia. He was the second son of Alexander Haslett and Charlotte Julia Porter. His father, Alexander Haslett was born in Highgate, Middlesex in England in 1844, and came to Australia in 1862. Charlotte Porter was also born in Highgate (her arrival date uncertain). Alexander and Charlotte were married in 1869 and had three children – Charles, Herbert (Bertie) and Charlotte Julia. Charlotte died of sepsis soon after the birth of her daughter, who died of malnutrition aged only 9 months. Later Alexander married again, to Cecilia Olivia Chamerozou and together they had Emily Maria Carlotta (died at age 8), Louis Alexander, Henrietta Olivia and Olivia Cecilia, Bertie's half-siblings.

In 1895, Bertie married Diana Helen Grant, who was born in 1868 in Dunolly, Victoria. Her parents were Donald Grant and Mary Ann Akers. Bertie and Diane Helen (known as Nellie) had three children, Myrtle, Violet and Ivy. Nellie died at home at the rear of 40 Molesworth Street in North Melbourne in 1902, of malignant disease (cancer). The three little girls were aged only 6, 4 and 2 years old when their mother died.

In 1916, Bertie volunteered to join the Australian Imperial Force as a soldier in the 22nd Battalion. When he enlisted, his age was recorded as 43 years and 8 months. This is part of Bertie's story.

## The diary

This diary was held by Bertie's second daughter, Violet Haslett, who married Sylvester Shorten in 1928. Violet handed the diary on to her daughters, Carmel, Moya and Margaret Shorten when she died in 1974.

The first part of the diary is undated, but comparing the events related in it with official army records from the 22nd Battalion (14th reinforcement), we can see that it starts in mid-1916 and ends in end of July 1917. The later section starts on January 17th 1918, and the last entry was made on 28th February 1918.

Bertie left Australia on board the *Themistocles* on 26 July 2016. He arrived in Plymouth, England and then he marched into Etaples, France on 17th November 1916 after sailing from Folkstone with his battalion.

The first part of the diary is headed simply '*Some notes on France from Boulogne to Campagne in Belgium*'. Bertie starts by describing Boulogne, a town that is almost directly opposite Folkstone from where he sailed - 'just as dilapidated as Spencer Street [the main train station in Melbourne at that time] in the old days' (p. 10). He goes on to describe the train ride to Etaples where they camp in the freezing cold. Here they undertake training, learning of different types of musketry and visiting the town of Etaples by night, calling it 'little Paris' (p. 12).

He goes on to describe some of the conditions the French people were enduring at this time, the cost of food and champagne ('five Franks a bottle'), the poor hygiene and sanitation, the lack of 'privacy and decency' when using Latrines, the stench of the streets and the uncomfortable cobble stones (p.13). He observes that the farmers are all 'women folk'.

The soldiers are billeted at Flesselles 'after 26 hours in trucks accompanied by flying machines'. He is not much impressed with the countryside of France, it being wet and dirty and the towns 'dilapidated' (p.14).

The utter devastation of the region of the Somme that Bertie travels through is made evident through his writing 'not a sign of a building left standing... nothing to be seen but miles and miles of wrecked trenches ... gun carriages, dead



horses and mules...’ He writes of the traffic coming along the road in the opposite direction, men with ‘a good few days whiskers and mud from head to foot’ (pp. 18-19) clearly a difficult journey for the 22nd Battalion as they marched through mud and across duck boards to their destination (p. 19).

He names some of the other soldiers and captains he works with, including Captain Robinson, Campbell, Bragg, Marshall, Smith and O’Hollingsworth, as they march under continuing shellfire (p.19).

Bertie worked in a ration dump, delivering supplies to these on the front line. He records the death of Sergeant Robes who was hit on the duckboards (p.21).

He writes of getting lost for six hours one day, with the others in his party, when delivering rations, to men on the front line. The officer in charge, Major Dooley insists that the men receive their rations ‘at all costs’, so they return with a guide, and successfully deliver them (p.21).

Bertie offers a moving description of being helped by a stretcher bearer, Private H. Robins, when he fell with exhaustion several times. Private Robins carried his pack and shovel for him and made him ‘keep in front of him until we reach our Camp’ (p. 23).

Around this time some of his comrades had ‘trench fever and trench feet’; Bertie himself develops a high temperature and spends 6 days in hospital and then a few days convalescing (p.24).

In the next segment, Bertie describes the ruined town of Albert, which was bombed in July 17. Here he paints a vivid picture of the destruction. Bicycle and sewing machine factories had been destroyed, leaving hundreds of sewing machine and bicycles lying in ruins there along with ‘tons of machinery’. He describes the famous Cathedral of Albert, *Notre Dame de Brebières*, whose beautiful Statue of the Virgin Mary ‘with arms outstretched holding a baby’ became known as the Leaning Statue as it rested perilously on an angle after being bombed by the German army. The local French people believed that the war would end only when the statue fell (pp. 26-28). Bertie says ‘if that is so, well it will hold for years although it is wrecked and shaken from top to bottom’ (p.27).

He tells of 'conscientious objectors' from Britain being employed cleaning up the town of Albert, and he passes through cemeteries and the large hospital – divided up for 'wounded cases, gas cases and contagious cases ... on a hill overlooking Sausage Gully' (p. 29).

Bertie is appointed as a 'batman' to Lieutenant Harrick. He goes on to write of his journey through towns including Bullecourt (April 1917) Warloy, Bayieux, Vaulx and Becourt (pp. 33-34).

In April, 1917, Bertie finds one of his own battalion killed, probably Private Winter No 5111 who was a sentry is noted in the army records to have died on 15 April 1917. Bertie and two friends, Cyril Dennett and Scotty McPherson buried him (pp.35-36). Major Dooley was injured in this same battle, and Bertie helped dress his wounds (p. 36). (Later that year, Major Dooley was awarded the Military Cross). Two other young men, H. Fry and S. Vass were also killed during this time, and Bertie says he was the last to speak with Private Fry (p. 37).

He tells of nearly being buried alive in a trench that collapses (p. 38) and that his friend Cyril Dennett later goes missing at Bullecourt (p. 38). War records note that Cecil Dennett from the 22nd Battalion was killed on 3rd May 1917.

Using terms such as 'froggies' for the French and 'fritz' for the Germans, he relates anecdotes of the soldiers' exploits - finding souvenirs from old German dugouts/trenches (such as cigars, a wooden leg, clothes 'in galore') and quite often comments that they 'had a good time' despite the hardships and destruction surrounding them (p.45).

In January 1918, Bertie starts heading back to Australia. He relates of church parades, final medical examinations and train travel through England including enjoying the welcome lunch by the Mayoress of Exeter (p. 55) finally embarking on the *SS Argyllshire* to return to Australia.

This dated section, he speaks of the general activities on board the ship, looking after 'cripples', feeling sea sick, playing 'housie' (a card game) and winning or losing, receiving rations of lime juice (to prevent scurvy) and quinine (for malaria), getting drunk or staying sober, getting 'pulled up' for smoking on the deck (p.49), the occasional burial at

sea (p.49) and sightings of large sharks. They travel to the Cape of Good Hope, where they were due to arrive on 27th February 1918 via Sierra Leone where they enjoyed all kinds of tropical fruits and play tricks with the locals – or it may have been something more sinister - when he says ‘we had fun with the niggers - shot one in the leg with a sudden death pudding (?)’ (p. 53) .

Of historical interest too, Bertie names several other ships that travelled alongside the *SS Argyllshire* – the *SS Gounit*, *SS Bismark*, *Cotte* *SS Euripidies* and a battle cruiser for protection (p. 50) (later named as *SS Balmoral Castle* (p. 56) He also mentions a *Mystery Ship* (p. 47) and *Ionia* (p. 57).

At times Bertie mentions not sleeping too well, ‘being nervie again’ (p. 60), an indication of what would now be called post-traumatic stress disorder. The diary ends when they arrive at the Cape on 28th February 1918 (p. 60).

Bertie was discharged from the AIF on 18th July 1918. His war service record is available at the National Archives of Australia. <https://www.naa.gov.au/explore-collection/>

Bertie’s diary has been held in the family for over 100 years but its age and delicate condition precluded widespread distribution, and thus few have had the opportunity to read his captivating text and to learn of the life of our ancestor during the First World War. I have scanned and transcribed this diary for the family and Bertie’s descendants but hope it will also be of interest to others. Any errors in transcription or interpretation are my own and can be corrected.

Elizabeth Crock, December 2019.

Some Notes on France from Boulogne  
& Campagne in Belgium  
Boulogne  
A large Shipping centre  
with a railway terminus just as  
dilapidated as Spencer Street in  
its old days the people are a very  
poor class the buildings are all  
on a large scale built of blue stone  
appear to be mostly warehouses,  
deserted and appear to be untenanted  
the roads are all cobble stones very  
hard for marching on the harbour  
and wharves are packed with  
boats of all descriptions from the  
fishing Smacks to the battle  
ships it is about 4.5 miles  
from the English port of Folkestone  
across the Channel and a  
regular service of boats run

## Some notes on France from Boulogne to Campagne in Belgium

### *Boulogne*

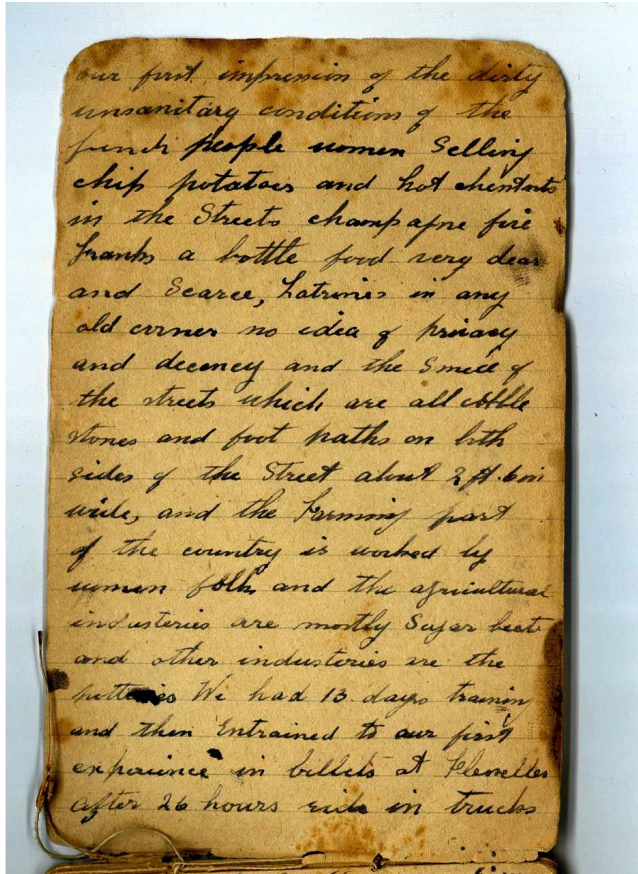
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run  
... illegible

Had one night in camp  
at Bulogne on what is known  
as Siberia or one tree hill a  
name that is very appropriate  
as I think it is the coldest  
place on God's Earth, got a good  
supply of tobacco at Station and  
entrained to our training base  
a train ride of 3 1/2 hours to a French  
Village of Etaples. Camped in tents  
which was on top of a large sandy  
hill and being on the sea coast  
was exposed to all the cold winds.  
We was always pleased to get  
away every morning to what  
is known as the Bull ring  
a very large training ground about  
three miles march through  
the various British camps and  
after leaving the camps we came  
to the Hospital camps.

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Australian Canadian Scottish  
and London then We pass the  
cemetery which was very well laid  
out by a permanent staff and  
was very conspicuous for the  
number of crosses made of wood  
and all of the one design and  
then We reach a New Zealand  
Artillery Camp, then We reach  
our training ground which is  
laid out with trenches and  
Barb wire and hippodrome  
for lecture on gas of the different  
kinds and musketry and Squad  
drills etc from 9.30 until  
2 P.M. then march home  
to our camp for the night  
where we could visit the  
Town of Etaples and we would  
visit it every night and to  
describe it by saying it was  
NOTE Paris P'tit little Paris

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our first impression of the dirty  
unsanitary conditions of the  
French people women selling  
chip potatoes and hot chestnuts  
in the Streets champagne five  
franks a bottle food very dear  
and Scarce, Latrines in any  
old corner no idea of privacy  
and decency and the smell of  
the streets which are all cobble  
stones and foot paths on both  
sides of the Street about 2 ft 6 in  
wide, and the farming part  
of the country is worked by  
women folk, and the agricultural  
industries are mostly Sugar beet  
and other industries are the  
potteries We had 15 days training  
and then entrained to our first  
experience in billets at Flesselles  
after 26 hours ride in trucks

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of the country is worked by  
women folk and the agricultural  
industries are mostly Sugar beet?  
and other industries are the  
potteries (?). We had 10 days training  
and then entrained to our first  
experience in billets at Flesselles  
(?) after 26 hours in trucks

accompanied by flying machines  
however we had a good view  
of the country passed through  
the champagne country and  
was not much impressed  
with France as we happened  
to go through Just as the  
wet part of the winter had  
Started however We duly arrived  
at Flesselles where we joined  
the Battalion and had a  
fortnight light training and  
then entrained to Kiblemont  
where We remained for a few  
days in billets. about Flesselles  
it was a dirty dilapidated  
Village mud was of the best  
and had a day or two fatigue  
unloading Shells of all Sizes  
and descriptions there was  
no place of interest in the  
whole Village but the county  
The irrepration Note Frost Prat ...etc illegible

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Note no Simitary: jardo manure Reopen  
and estaminet the froggies  
cut off our water supply  
by taking the handles off the  
windlars So we polluted  
their wells and found another  
However We left Fleselles on a  
very cold day and as there  
was 30 or 36 in each truck  
we did not do too bad Well  
Nuff Said about Fleselles  
Now for Kiblemont We had  
a good billet in a barn  
very cold but plenty of Straw  
So we did not fare too bad  
there was marched by Major  
Dooley to Healy for a bath  
which was very good as  
we was bejining to get the  
vermin very bad We marched  
from Kiblemont to Fleurs wood  
here Jock cut my hand very  
badly Note

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vermin very bad. We marched  
from Kiblemont to Fleurs wood  
here Jock cut my hand very badly Note

about Kiblemont We took our billets  
from a tommie regiment and  
on our arrival We had a pay  
and the prices went up to  
double the price for everything  
for us with the result that  
we was the means of getting  
all estaminets put out of  
bounds after 2 days there we  
marched to Fleurs wood a  
old battle field which gave  
us an idea of the destruction  
of a battle in a Village nothing  
left standing but the porch  
of a large church and a part  
of the tower the porch was  
used for our dry canteen We  
Camped in huts for 2 days rest  
and then marched off to Melbourne  
camp about 3 1/2 miles from  
our line in Ginchy We

Perriot concert

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Perriot concert (on side of this page)

they proceeded to the line for  
the first time; our march from  
Fleur Wood to Melbourne Camp  
was full of interest as we went  
through invaded country not  
the sign of a building left  
standing for the whole 18 miles  
nothing to be seen but miles  
and miles of wrecked trenches  
broken limbers & gun carriages  
dead horses and mules all  
along the route then we would  
come to what was once a large  
Sugar works nothing left but  
damaged boilers and machinery  
knocked into all shapes a little  
further we would come across  
what was an agricultural imple-  
ment works nothing left even  
worth salvaging all along the  
road was traffic coming down

Materlot farm (?)

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of all descriptions men with a  
good few days whiskers and mud  
from head to foot the hardest  
march that any of us had  
had up to date We are by  
this time well saturated with  
mud up to our knees not  
the happiest day of our lives  
as we had to keep going to  
the end as there was no chance  
of a rest which is usual on  
a long march owing to the  
wrecked and ruined country  
on both sides of the road there  
was scarcely a foot of country  
as far as the eye could reach  
but what it was shell wrecked  
We finally reached our destination  
a camp built in what was  
once a wood but just the  
butts of the trees left and

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the only chance of going from  
one hut to another was on the  
duck boards if we got off we  
would sink in the mud from  
anywhere to the waist. We had  
a day or two rest and then off up  
the line, I was then on a ration  
dump with Cpt Robinson Fay.  
Don Campbell Bragg Marshall  
Smith O' Hollingsworth under Lieut  
Hamilton there was nothing remarkable  
to relate on the march into the  
line but our dump no doubt  
was observed for after the  
first day in was continually  
under shell fire our packs would  
arrive at 6 A.M. - 9 P.M.  
We would then be finished  
our issue for the day Fay Robinson Lieut Hamilton  
and his batman was in the  
gun pits dug out not  
Note Fritz's Boot with foot in

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to relate on the march into the  
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was observed for after the  
first day in was continually  
under shell fire our packs would  
arrive at 6 A.M. and 4 P.M.  
We would then be finished  
our issue for the day Fay Robinson Lieut Hamilton  
and his batman was in the  
gun pits dug out not  
Note Fritz's Boot with foot in

very visible but very windy  
Don and I dug ourselves in  
in a bank close to the dump  
snug enough but we'd got an  
order for Sand bags to be  
shared bet Cam myself and  
Bragg & Marshall Just missed  
my full issue of iron rations  
through sharing bags and kip (?)  
all went well until our  
quantity of rum came and I  
had a good time can relate  
that myself had six days on  
the dump Joel was on 2 M.S  
with C. Coy cooks came out for  
two days and up again on the  
same job was up over night  
and tea only arrived the next  
morn took taley from pack and  
and let them go I then woke  
Fay R - who checked the tea

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and as we was under very  
heavy Shell fire Robey went to  
Hd Qrs and was badly knocked  
on the duck boards and died next  
day Sgt Robertson then took charge  
of us and joined us up to a  
ration party had to carry rations  
about three miles to Hd Qrs and  
deliver then proceed to the front  
line with some our first night  
was very disasterous as our  
whole party got lost for 6 hrs  
reported back to Major Dooley who  
was in command said the men  
must have rations at all costs  
So under another guide we went  
and delivered them and was back  
in 1/2 an hour then had to go  
back to our dug out in thistle  
trench which consisted of two  
sheets of iron and 4 of us to

and as we was under very  
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Hd Qrs and was badly knocked  
on the duck boards and died next  
Note I missed the finish of this trip  
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sit under it till 4 P.M. and  
then off again for rations again  
on our way back we was chased  
and had to go about  $\frac{1}{4}$  a mile  
under very heavy fire but we  
all got back without any losses  
but very lucky our Sgt was very  
good to us gave us our issue  
when finished and dawn in  
the morning very good to His  
men as our party was now 28  
Strong dark at 4.00 we used to  
start off at 4.06 and make  
good head way before it was  
quite dark We would finish  
about 2 A.M. and start again  
at 4 P.M. We finished our term  
of 6 days and came out on to  
our Melb. Camp back to the mud  
and Slush again had about 24  
hours rest and was detailed

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then off again for rations again  
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to a Fatigue party to dig a Sap  
Started off at 12.30 Sunday and  
was held up for a guide until  
8.30 P.M. and proceeded over  
no mans land under difficulties  
through the continuous flares of  
The enemy was very close and  
on flat country so was very easy  
observed finished our job and left  
for home at 2.00 P.M. under a  
heavy barrage from our own  
Artillerie was on this stunt  
that I knew what a real  
comrade was as I was getting  
beat getting broke up entirely  
I had to stick or get left to my  
fate in no mans land after  
falling with exhaustion several  
times Pte. H. Robins as He was  
stretcher bearer to our Company  
He relieved me of my pack & shovel

to a Fatigue party to dig a Sap.  
Started off at 12.30 Sunday and  
was held up for a guide until  
8.30 P.M. and proceeded over  
no man's land under difficulties  
through the continuous flares of  
the enemy was very close and  
on flat country so was very easy  
observed finished our Job and left  
for home at 2.00 P.M. under a  
heavy barrage from our own  
Artillerie was on this stunt  
that I knew what a real  
comrade was as I was getting beat  
getting broke up entirely  
I had to stick or get left to my  
fate in no man's land after  
falling with exhaustion several  
times Pte. H. Robins as He was  
stretcher bearer to our Company  
He relieved me of my pack and shovel

and made me keep in front  
of him until we reached our  
camp however the next day  
we went into the line again  
for 6 days lost several with  
trench feet & trench fever there  
was nothing sensational to  
relate until we came out  
on the following Saturday when  
I was still feeling very shaky  
and was paraded to the M.O.  
as I had a very high temperature  
was ordered to hospital and  
had to sleep at rec Station  
in Melb camp and was  
transferred to Anyae rest  
camp at Belview farm had  
6 days in Hospital and was  
transferred to Convalescent  
was there a few days and  
was taken on strength of the  
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visited Albert every day and  
had an opportunity of seeing  
all the ruins of the recent  
bombardments a few notes  
I give here of Albert.

A very large business Centre  
had a look at the Somme River  
that was frozen in several  
parts and is used greatly  
for electric power and runs  
under and through several  
of the large Sewing machine  
Bicycle factories also Iron  
foundries also a large brewery  
all these places in ruins  
with tons upon tons of machinery  
lying in ruins hundreds of  
Sewing machines and bicycles  
in ruins then there was one of  
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furniture and altars that  
are left show that everything  
is of the latest works of Art  
and architecture the furniture  
is all apparently new and  
all the fittings and furniture  
are made of French grown  
walnut then there is the  
main part of this church  
the tower with a beautiful  
Statue of the Virgin Mary  
with arms outstretched holding  
a baby the Statue of V.M. is  
I believe 30 feet high and the  
child is 6 feet in length  
and the tower all told I believe  
is about 300 feet from base  
the Statue is laid over by  
the engineers as it was used  
as a rifler for the enemy  
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They are superstitious about this  
Statue as they all say that  
when the Leaning Statue as it  
is called, falls the war will  
end. But if that  
will it will hold for years  
although it is wrecked and  
Shaken from top to bottom  
then there is the main Street  
of Albert like all other French  
Villages no length but instead  
of corners or Squares the streets  
all wind in here and out  
there till you get out of the  
town which is well marked  
by finger boards Rue de Pozieres  
Rue De Becourt Rue De Bapaume  
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wide enough for 2 abreast  
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and when I first seen Albert  
it was like all other parts  
of the Somme dirty and mud  
and rubbish of all kinds but  
as there are very few places  
left that don't show the effects  
of the bombardments there  
was very little civilian life  
when I first went through  
but when I last went through  
the people was coming back  
and the British regiment of  
Conscientious Objectors was emp-  
loyed cleaning it up and  
putting it in repair as it  
is well out of range of the  
enemy guns there is also a  
large Cemetery well looked  
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a very large hospital the H. Qrs  
of it is in a very large building  
partly wrecked with Shell fire  
and covered in parts on the  
roof with tarpaulins and all  
the grounds are laid out into  
sections of tents for gas cases,  
wounded cases in another part,  
sick in another and contagious  
diseases in another part known  
as the isolation, it is on a hill  
overlooking parts of Sausage Gully  
and the railway for the convey-  
ance of patients from other  
Stations it is known as the  
advanced receiving hospital  
at the corner of the road  
at the foot of the hospital  
grounds there is a Shrine  
with the Savior on a large  
wooden cross it is known

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as the charred cross for the  
reason that the fence and  
tree around it are all ruined  
and burned but the cross  
is just charred and the cross  
it is left perfect it is known  
by all soldiers in France as the  
charred cross corner; then a  
little further is the historical  
poziers just one continual course  
of ruined trenches and dug outs  
every 50 or hundred yards will  
be seen perhaps a wooden cross  
with the words just readable  
here lies an unknown British  
hero or just a little further  
is little squares of barb wire  
with a cross and the names of  
9, 10 or 20 British soldiers on a  
small tablet of Alimneum  
and at the bottom will say  
also 15 germans or 6 germans

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whatever it might be there are  
also Shells of all descriptions and  
bombs lying in all directions.  
then there is the famous mine  
Crater it is a hole 200 feet across  
and 80 feet deep and I believe  
it cost 1500 British lives I have  
not got full particulars of  
it but I believe the mine  
was exploded when our troops  
was on the advance and it  
demolished a german Hd Qrs  
then there is a little further  
Lendernassin all the same kind  
of country a place where there  
was some very heavy fighting  
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a fair part of the winter and  
Le Sars and Walencourt Le Butt  
a mound that we won and  
lost 11 times and finally  
evacuated in the big retreat  
in March 1917 where Fritz fell  
back 10 miles beyond Bapaume  
We then came to Becaulde a  
place that is isolated and  
concealed by trees and camouflage  
and then we came to Scotts  
Piedoubt a place where there  
was some very heavy fighting  
and then to Ma Mater Wood  
where we camped for a few  
days and then went up the  
line again for 4 days in supports  
at the 7 Elms and from " "  
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singing and playing the whistle  
and I was with H. Lowe and  
Lonergan on gas guard under very  
heavy shell fire all the time for  
four days was with Hd Qrs and  
was sniped through a gap in  
a wall of the old Walencourt  
Abbey; and was posted in the  
cellar with Artillerie officer and  
2 men two snipers 4 patrols  
4 scouts and fatigue. Some  
were killed and Lonergan morning  
came out at 2 A.M. and  
marched back to Shelter wood  
and remained there for a few  
days and was detailed as a  
batman to Lieutenant Harricks.  
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on that trip I had a good  
time visiting Warloy and  
near the village from one end  
to end and had a good part  
of march in the two camps  
as officers cook etc with  
Lieut Spiller L. Harricks L. Short  
Capt Godfrey and did very  
well out of the job and went  
back and joined up the Battn  
at Ma Marty wood and went  
from there to Becourt for  
2 days and then marched  
from there to Vaux had to  
dig ourselves in after a 18 miles  
march with full packs We  
got half way by lunch time  
and our cookers arrived and  
gave us hot meat and tea  
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We visited the Village of Vaux  
and it was the same as the  
rest of the Villages We had  
passed through including little  
Bapaume We found cutlery  
cigars and souvenirs in galore  
but as we was just in battle  
order We could not carry  
them then we went into the  
line for four days in supports  
marched all night and arrived  
in the line at 3 A.M. Six A.M.  
Rum issue very cold had a box on  
for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour Fritz had  
1000 casualties prisoners and  
casualties coming in all day  
found one of our lads killed  
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Rum issue very cold had a box on  
for  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour Fritz had  
10.00 casualties prisoners  
and casualties coming in all day  
found one of our lads killed Scotty McPherson  
Cecil Dennet and myself wrapped him up and

buried him Spotted by Fritz had  
to get. drew Shell fire had to  
lie quiet the rest of the day  
next day found 2 of our lads  
buried and smothered about 10  
a.m. Major Dooley was wounded  
on the Shoulder and arm I  
helped to dress him and help his  
batman Fr Crawford to get him  
away to hospital. We was  
then in a Sunken road at  
Narrelle at the left of Lagnacourt  
We was for the next two days  
under continuous Shell fire  
We had several casualties  
the number of 24 up to 4.30  
on the fourth day We was  
then lectured by our Officer  
in charge Lieut Harricks  
as we was going to hop it  
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waiting night fall to take  
over the front line which lay  
about 3/4 of a mile towards  
three Villages on our front  
right and left, names not  
known to me however We reached  
the front line at about 8.30  
Just before leaving and waiting  
for night fall Fritz sent his  
farewell shot and killed  
two of our lads name H. Fry  
and J. Vass when I left Cpl  
Park and a party was left  
back to bury them I was the  
last to speak to H. Fry having  
spoken to him not a minute  
before and the unfortunate  
part was his first time  
up also Vass as we left  
them behind at Etaples  
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front line Cyril Dennett: Remp  
Company runner and myself  
was in a dug out first night  
and just got off to sleep when  
the bank fell in and I was  
buried with no bad results  
however it was all pretty quiet  
until our time of falling in  
to leave excepting for an occasional  
salvo and a wrecked tank  
on our right where he used  
to pepper away day and night  
alike on our two days in the  
front line it rained steadily  
all the time Cyril & myself  
had the rationing of Lieut H.Hr  
& Lieut Greigg: Since killed and  
Cyril Dennett missing at Ballecourt  
on coming out. We was bombed  
by two Air craft which dropped  
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We got out under difficulties  
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but got cut up to about 2  
miles from our allotted camp  
and on our turn off Joe Stanley  
H. Robbins and myself  
lay down on the road side  
and went off to Sleep and  
woke to find the whole  
Brigade had gone ahead  
Seeing a light on the road  
I made for it and it happened  
to be one of our Lieutenants  
name Spiller and as He was  
acting as guiding Star to  
our brigade He directed  
us and We had not gone  
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plod through the mud and  
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or two Sleep there was Don  
Campbell Jock Holdroyd H  
Robbins L. Cpt McDonald  
and myself Harry Robbins  
and I went out and found  
a Y. M. C. A. as I was  
cashed up I financed for  
cigs for the mob and  
Lieut Harricks financed  
his platoon during the day  
We found that we was in  
a camp named Flauselle  
and we had a few days  
good time rest for a few  
days and then settled down  
for hard work had several  
night and early morning stunts  
it was then about the 20th of  
April the weather getting finer.

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We practiced the Stunts under  
the command of Lt Col Daris  
We had a very good time with  
football cricket hot baths  
concerts etc and everything  
was done to make life  
worth the trouble until  
the whole Brigade marched  
out to the lead of our Band  
preparatory to going over at  
Bullicourt it was on May 2<sup>nd</sup>  
1917 We had four days of the  
hardest and came out on  
the 6<sup>th</sup> just about 1/4 strength  
Went to The 5<sup>th</sup> Army Signal  
School at Contay Was there  
three weeks was crimed  
for A.W.L off parade got dis-  
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passed through Warloy and  
Cenilis Met Poor Old Jock  
Had dinner with our old  
Platoon and Had a few drinks  
with Jock & Cam then went  
back to the Chateux and  
remained a few days and  
Lieut Harricks and I left  
to join up the Battalion and  
was in a billet with Capt  
Rodda Lieut Harricks L. Smith  
Lieut Layles and had a good  
time there going to Sports and  
Swimming in the Aveloy  
Lakes which I will describe  
Note these lakes are all around  
this country and was one  
of Fritz's strong defences and  
was all laid with barb wire  
and dug outs and the water  
was let in from the Anere  
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River and it left miles of

of good country under water  
and it was made good use  
of by us for a days swimming.  
We then Marched from Bourgon  
Court to a railway siding name  
Sierra and Entrained from a  
siding the 21st & 23rd went  
in the leading train and they  
was bombed by a tank but  
the train was undamaged  
and the line blown up in  
several places with the result  
that a fatigue party of tommies  
was caught with 20 or 30 losses  
We was held up for about  
6 hours and as it was a  
beautiful day and We had  
the 24th and 22nd bands  
on hand We had an un-  
expected picnic until the  
line was repaired and

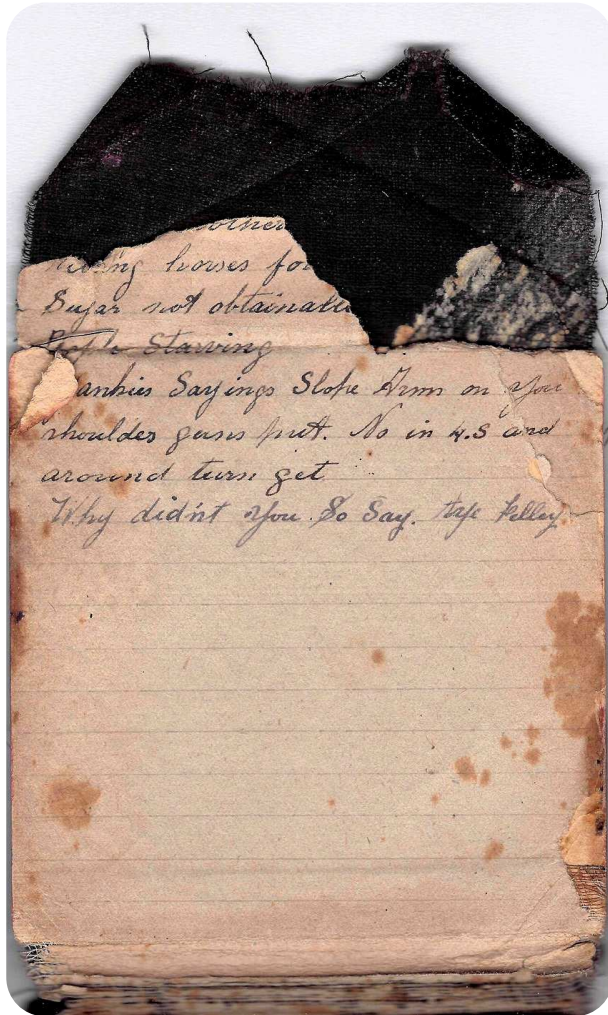
good country under water  
and it was made good use  
of by us for a day's swimming.  
We then Marched from Bourgon  
Court to a railway siding name  
Sierra and Entrained from a  
siding the 21st to 23rd went  
in the leading train and they  
was bombed by a tank but  
the train was undamaged  
and the line blown up in  
several places with the result  
that a fatigue party of tommies  
was caught with 20 or 30 casualties.  
We was held up for about  
6 hours and as it was a  
beautiful day and We had  
the 24th and 22nd bands  
on hand, We had an un-  
expected picnic until the  
line was repaired and

we advanced to our destination  
Bapaume and Shunted back  
and run to a Station about  
3 miles distant name Achel  
De Grand and detrained there  
and marched through Bapaume  
to a camping ground in Guerch-  
necourt the whole brigade in  
close touch the 21st 22nd and  
23 in one camp and the 24th  
was camped on a hill near  
a wrecked Sugar who about  
3/4 of a mile further on We rem-  
ained there for about 6 weeks and  
had a good time had brigade  
and Divisional and Battalion  
Stunts I was here on a night  
Stunt and had a prisoner  
to take to Hd Qrs when he  
tried to escape and I fired  
and brought him back and  
was put under arrest and

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and run to a station about  
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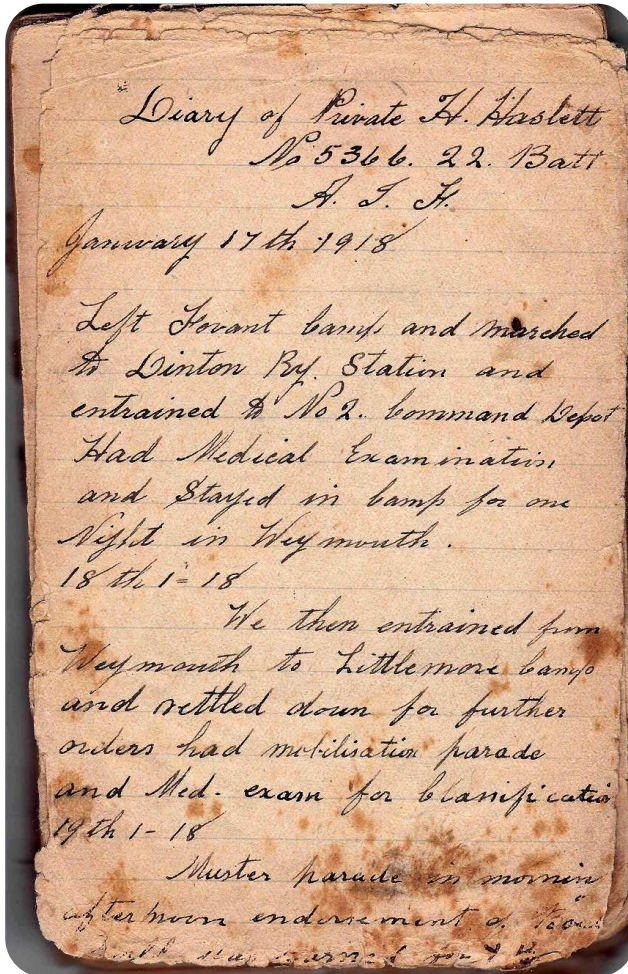
kept captive for 16 hours and was  
brought up before Major Dooley  
and dismissed with a caution.  
We was close to a large Village  
name Ville De Flors where there  
was wreckage and trenches in  
all quarters including a very  
large church and a Chateau  
was all wreckage. F.B. Kennedy  
Allen Bennetts and I went for  
a day out all over the old SA  
of Le Fransky and went down  
a lot of Fritz's old dugouts found  
cigars and Souvenirs in great  
quantities found a wooden leg  
and gun emplacements and  
ammunition and clothes in  
galore. Went back to camp  
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Of Le Fransky? And Went down  
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quantities found a wooden leg  
and gun emplacements and  
ammunition and clothes in  
galore. Went back to camp  
had a good time.



Riding horses for  
Sugar not obtainable  
People Starving  
Yankee Sayings Slope Arm on your  
shoulders gases put. No. in 4 S and  
around turn get.  
Why didn't you So say. Hafe Felley (unclear)





**Diary of Private H. Haslett**  
**No 5366 22 Batt**  
**A.I.F.**

January 17th 1918

Left Forant camp and marched  
to Dinton By Station and  
entrained to No. 2 Command Depot  
Had medical Examination  
and Stayed in Camp for one  
night in Weymouth.

18th 1- 18

We then entrained from  
Weymouth to Littlemore Camp  
and settled down for further  
orders had mobilisation parade  
and Med. exam for Classification

19th 1-18

Muster parade in morning  
afternoon endorsement  
Next line illegible

20th 1-18  
Sunday  
Church parade nothing further  
21-1-18  
Nothing doing  
22-1-18 do do  
23. Handed in Surplus kit prep  
to leaving camp for Embarkation  
24th Drew Shortages and ordinary  
Parade Visited adjoining Village  
25th Morning Parade Nothing else  
doing up to 4 P.M.  
26th Nothing to note  
27th do do Church Parade  
28th do do  
29th wrote to Beatie Holdergot  
30th Final Med. Exam 31 Nothing  
31st Entrained from Upwey for  
Devonport and embarked on  
board Y Boat SS. Argyleshire  
February 1st Went to anchorage

20th-1-18

Sunday

Church parade nothing further

21-1-18

Nothing doing

22-1-18 do do

23 Handed in Surplus kit prep

to leaving Camp for Embarkation

24th Drew Shortages and ordinary

Parade. Visited adjoining Village

25th Morning Parade Nothing else

doing up to 4 P.M.

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27th do do Church Parade

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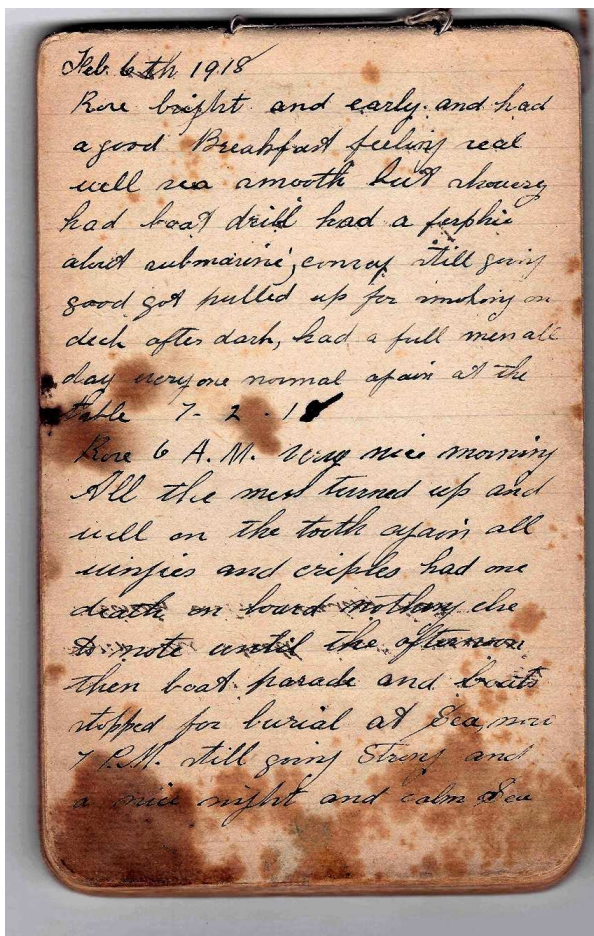
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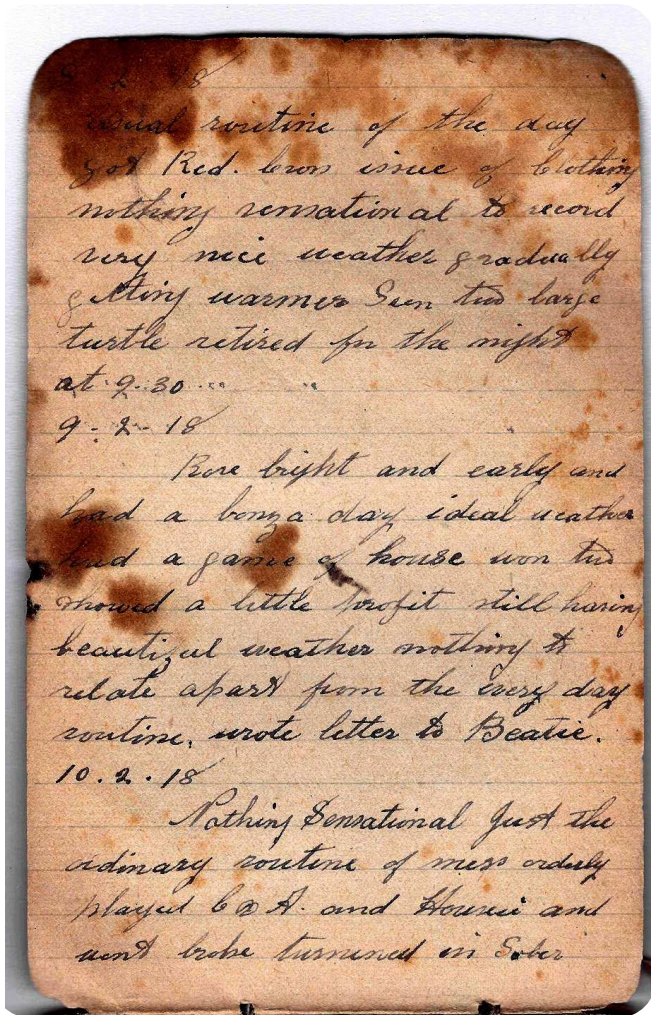


Feb 6th 1918

Rose bright and early and had  
a good Breakfast feeling real  
well sea smooth but showery  
had boat drill had a ferphie (?)  
about submarine; convoy still going  
good got pulled up for smoking on  
deck after dark, had a full mess  
all day everyone normal again at the  
table

7.2.18

Rose 6 A.M. very nice morning.  
All the men turned up and  
well on the tooth again all  
injuries and cripples had one  
death on board nothing else  
to note until the afternoon  
then boat parade and boats  
stopped for burial at Sea, now  
7 P.M. still going strong and  
a nice night and calm Sea.



8.2.18

Usual routine of the day

Got Red Cross issue of Clothing  
nothing sensational to record  
very nice weather gradually  
getting warmer Seen large turtle  
retired for the night at 2.30...

9.2.18

Rose bright and early and  
had a bonza day ideal weather  
had a game of house won then  
showed a little profit still having  
beautiful weather nothing to  
relate apart from the every day  
routine, wrote letter to Beatie.

10.2.18

Nothing sensational Just the  
ordinary routine of mess orderly  
played C and A and Housie and  
went broke turned in Sober

and steady very warm on our deck

11-2-18

Rose bright and early as fresh as a lark had breakfast and cleaned up rec first pay at Sea of 10/- Convoy spreading out Aux C - turned back and had a good cruise around our boat running last the Euripidies a long way in the land the Mystery ship close up again can distinguish ship head on the funnel 12.00 Dinner time afternoon quiet after tea run game of house did fairly well retired 9.30 very warm on our deck Slept well

12-2-18

Rose bright and early very high breeze blowing beautiful day not too warm owing to high wind

and steady very warm on our deck.

11.2.19

Rose bright and early as fresh as a lark had breakfast and cleaned up rec first pay at Sea pf 10/- Convoy spreading out Aux C \_\_\_\_\_ turned back and had a good cruise around our boat running last the Euripidies a long way in the land the Mystery ship close up again can distinguish Ship head on the funnel 12.00 dinner time afternoon quiet after tea run game of house did fairly well retired 9.30 very warm on our deck. Slept well.

12.2.18

Rose bright and early very high breeze blowing beautiful day not too warm owing to high wind

had boat parade, nothing to  
record of any interest Just the  
every day routine of mess orderly  
to 18 Criples all going well tomorrow  
still going strong 9th day out  
Had tea run game of housie  
Caught a chat on nice shirt  
made a few bob and turned in  
very warm all port holes closed  
Slept well  
13th 2.18  
rose at sun rise lovely breeze  
blowing rough sea everything  
going real well finished toil  
and had game house won one and  
showed little profit retired to  
await inspection had dinner  
and game of 60 A went flat  
had recovery on game of housie  
made a little then lost again  
at 2 up retired on deck slept in

had boat parade nothing to  
record of any interest Just the  
every day routine of mess orderly  
to 18 Criples all going well Convoy  
still going strong 9th day out.  
Had tea run game of housie  
Caught a chat on nice shirt  
made a few bob and turned in  
very warm all port holes closed.  
Slept well.

13th.2.18

Rose at sun rise lovely breeze  
blowing rough sea everything  
going real well finished toil  
and had game house none one  
and showed little profit retired I  
await inspection had dinner  
and game of C and A went flat  
had recovery on game of housie  
made a little then lost again  
at 2 up retired on deck slept in

the open tray from  
14<sup>th</sup> 1918

Arrived at dawn in the  
Harbour of Sierra Leone remained  
there all day had some fun with  
the niggers hit one on leg with  
a wooden death pud. ing had  
Some oranges Bananas and some  
African apples very hot had a good  
view of St Pierre the capital of  
Sierra Leone all kinds of tropical  
fruits & coco nuts growing right  
down to the beach passed the  
Empress of Britian and another  
boat loaded with reinforcements  
Buildings and surroundings of the  
Island all of a modern style  
had a ships concert in the night  
very good Gln Davis presided deck  
crowded getting very hot can't remain  
on our deck 16<sup>th</sup> still at service

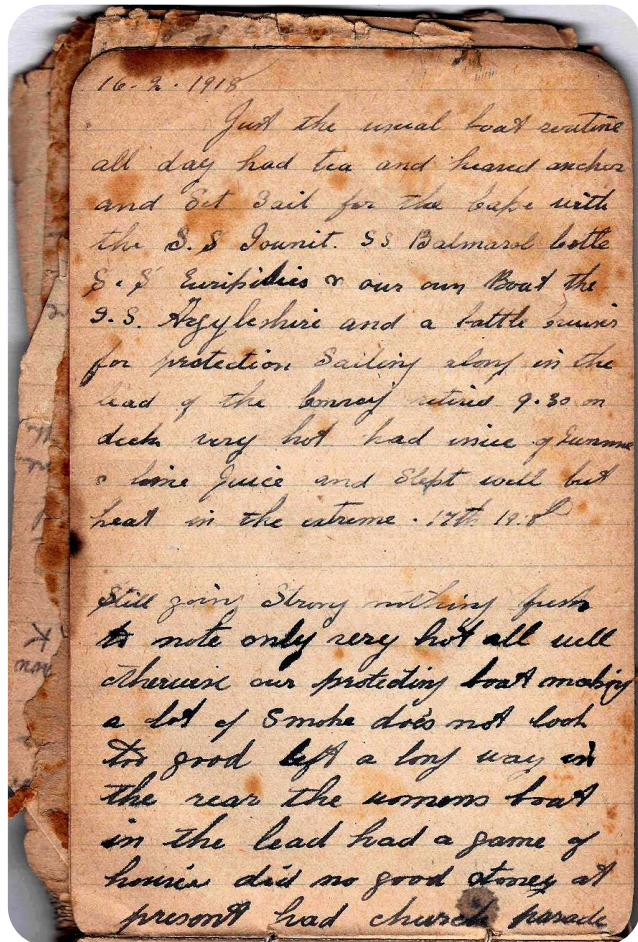
Had Song of She's a ding ding ding

the open trez bienne [sic].

14th- 15th 2.1918

Arrived at dawn in the  
Harbour of Sierra Leone remained  
there all day had some fun with  
the niggers hit one on leg with  
a sudden death p...ing? had  
some oranges, Bananas and some  
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view of St Piere the capital of  
Sierra Leone all kinds of tropical  
fruits and Coconuts growing right  
down to the beach passed the  
Empress of Britian [sic] and another  
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Buildings and surroundings of the  
Island all of a modern style  
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very good Gln Davis presided deck  
crowded getting very hot can't remain  
on our deck 16th still at service.

Written on side of this page: had song of She's a  
ding ding ding.



16.2.1918

Just the usual boat routine all day had tea and heaved anchor and set sail for the Cape with the S.S. Gounit S.S. Bismarck Cotte S.S. Euripidies and our own boat the S.S. Argylshire and a battle cruiser for protection. Sailing along in the lead of the convoy retired 9.30 P.M. on deck very hot had issue of quinine and lime juice and slept well but heat in the extreme 17th-19th

Still going strong nothing fresh to note only very hot all well otherwise our protecting boat making a lot of smoke does not look too good left a long way in the rear the women's boat in the lead had a game of housie did no good stoney (?) at present had church parade



nothing in view but the Sea Plane  
R.C. Service on our deck note for  
very hot sleeping on Deck.  
A few notes on travels since 17.1.18  
Left Toroni in very heavy snow  
had snow fight on road to the  
Dinton Station entrained to Weymouth  
went before board and entrained  
to Upwey to Littlemore Camp and had  
a good time until we entrained  
to Devonport travelled through some  
beautiful country everything looking  
good Had lunch provided by the  
Mayress & Committee of Exeter  
arrived at Devonport at mid day  
and embarked at 4.30 P.M.  
had tea on board had onion  
oil stew in galore food very  
very crook for a start went mess  
orderly to a cripple table going  
very good now 17.2.18

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very good now 17.2.18

17.2.18. continued  
turned in on Deck 9 P.M. Still  
very hot slept till ten 30 had to  
roll up and go below crossed  
the line and Struck S.W. trades  
18.2.18  
Rose early fresh wind blowing  
had first view of the Sthm Cross  
a lot cooler and travelling full  
speed ahead lying last of the  
convoy S.S. Ionia leading accomp  
by the Btle Cruiser S.S. Balmoral Cstle  
on our left, S.S. Euripidies rear  
left S.S. Britania in Centre  
Just seen large Shark alongside  
Still very warm but travelling  
about 297 to 300 miles per day  
on retiring we are still making  
good progress run house and  
cleared exes near pay day  
everyone nearly broke had

17.2.18 Continued

turned in on Deck 9 P.M. still  
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everyone nearly broke had

issue of Quinine & Lime Juice  
feeling A. I but too damn  
D.T. Lights out 9 o'clock.

19. 2. 18

Rose early and seen the results  
of the storm over night everything  
blown about good sea running  
Ionia still leading and we are  
still in the rear. Seen large shark  
Nothing extraordinary to note

20<sup>th</sup> nothing much doing  
Still very warm

21 Still going strong but  
nothing to relate

22 Second pay of 10F  
Still very hot well on our  
way to the cape

23 another fine day Strong  
breeze on very close together  
Battleship Britannia we  
are still running last

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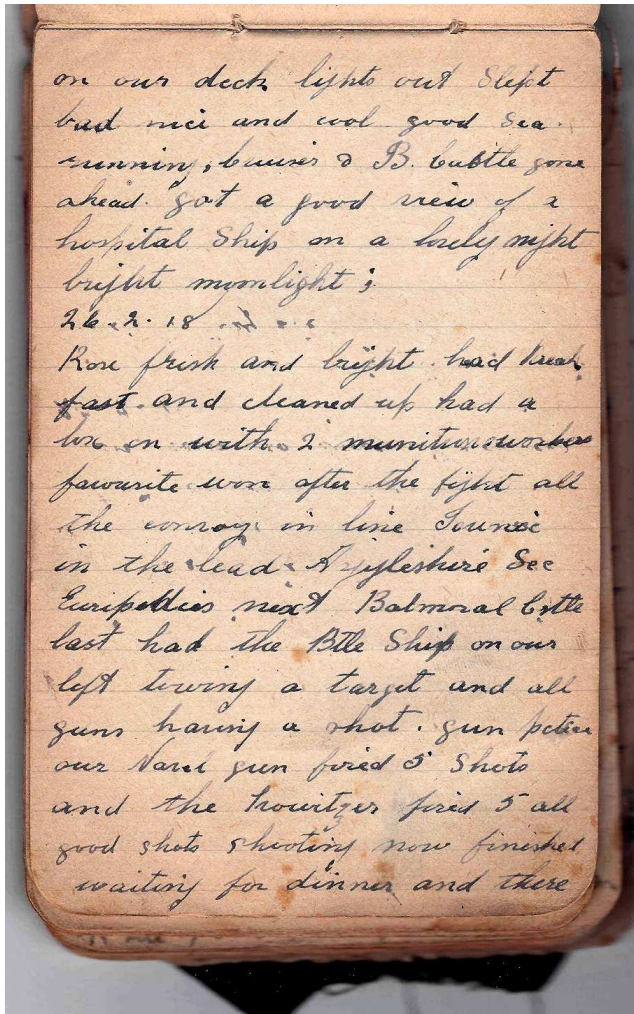
Still very hot well on our  
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23 another fine day Strong  
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Battleship Britannia we  
are still running last.

24.2.18. Continued  
Have slowed down to 11 knots  
as we are due at the cape on  
Wed 27th. Had game of housie  
did fair. afternoon no luck in  
the evening had a good time  
running Housie had a good  
time finished up well. retired  
on deck nice and cool had  
a good time as it is gradually  
getting cooler homings? taken  
down thus no more hot weather  
25.2.18 Nothing to relate So  
far 12. A. M. taking stock of Ship's  
stores cutlery etc had a game of  
diddle and tush hit the post  
afternoon had a couple of games  
of house did no good tea as usual  
nothing sensational after tea run  
housie and made a few bob  
got a nice little School going

#### 24.2.18 Continued

Have slowed down to 11 knots  
as we are due at the cape on  
Wed 27th. Had game of housie  
did fair. Afternoon no luck in  
the evening had a good  
time running housie had a good  
time finished up well. Retired  
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nothing sensational and made a few bob  
got a nice little School going



on our deck lights out Slept  
bad nice and cool good sea  
running, Cruiser & B. Castle gone  
ahead. Got a good view of a  
hospital ship on a lovely night  
bright moonlight;

26.2.18

Rose fresh and bright had break-  
fast and cleaned up had a  
box on with 2 munitions workers  
favourite won after the fight all  
the convoys in line Ionia  
in the lead, Argylshire Sec  
Euripidies next Balmoral Castle  
last had the Btle Ship on our  
left towing a target and all  
guns having a shot. Gun petier?  
our Naval gun fired 5 Shots  
and the howitzer fired 5 all  
good shots shooting now finished  
waiting for dinner and there

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is a concert farewell concert of  
the Argyllshire We are now nearing  
the Cape expecting to arrive tomorrow  
Later concert Postponed had a  
run at house best run so far  
made a few bob retired not too  
well nerve again and bad head  
could not sleep,

27th 2. 1918

Wednesday a beautiful day  
strong sea running sighted  
a Steamer going north had the  
usual inspection afternoon got  
our third pay of 10f are still  
going strong and up to date we  
have had a splendid trip here  
had nothing to complain about  
expecting to reach the Cape in  
a few hours and after re-emb-  
arkation in hope of some leave  
28th arrived at Cape 11 A.M.

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arkationX in hope of some leave X  
28th arrived at Cape 11 A.M.

Anchored out and was last  
boat alongside put in at  
wharf at 3-30 had tea and  
got leave around the cape  
for the night arrived at  
the boat at Mid night  
remained on board all day  
and entrained to Wyndorf  
a very nice camp out  
in the country part of  
the cape had a tea and  
had a night out at  
the pictures

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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ART02352





