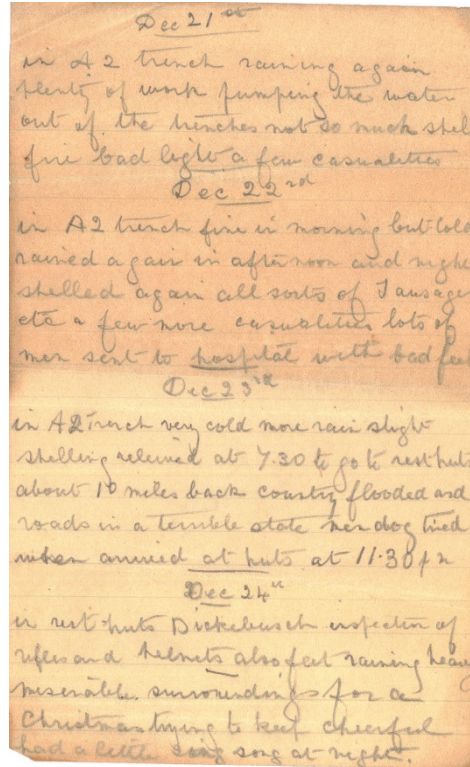


**The diary of Private Charles A. Johnson,  
1/4<sup>th</sup> East Yorkshire Regiment  
(1889-1917)**



In the 1911 census Johnson can be found in the household of his uncle Joseph Holtby, living at Ashby near Doncaster. He worked as a bricklayer before the war. Charles went to France in April 1915 and fought in the Ypres salient. During 1915 he kept a diary – the last entry is dated 30<sup>th</sup> December. Entries are written in a small, now rather battered black covered notebook, in pencil throughout. The last few entries are on loose leaves of paper. It is a diary full of the brutal realities of war.

Johnson served with C Company of the 1/4<sup>th</sup> Battalion the East Yorkshire Regiment (service number 28437), before transferring to the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion early in 1917. He was killed on 14/6/1917 and buried in the British cemetery at Monchy-Le-Preux (near Arras). He is described on one of his photographs as having dark grey eyes, mid brown hair and a fair complexion. He was one of three brothers from the family who served; only one returned home.

We would like to thank relatives for access to the original diary, photographs and other related material. Some place names have been altered from the original spellings in order to aid identification. Notes and explanations are in square brackets.

## **Title page**

Property of:

Private C.A. Johnson

2511 C Coy

1<sup>st</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> East Yorks Rgt.

1<sup>st</sup> York & Durham Brigade

[50<sup>th</sup>] Northumbrian Division

Brit. Expeditionary Force

Pte. C.A. Johnson

12 Lockwood St. Hull

### **April 17<sup>th</sup>**

Left **Newcastle** 8.20. Arrived **Boulogne** at 10.00 o'clock. Stopped at rest camp all night.

### **April 18<sup>th</sup>**

Left Boulogne : entrained for **Cassel**, stayed in a barn until morning.

### **April 19<sup>th</sup>**

Left Cassel for farm, place unknown, in a barn.

### **April 20<sup>th</sup>**

Still in a barn near **Godewaersvelde**, easy day.

### **April 21<sup>st</sup>**

Route march through **Godewaersvelde** and **Steenvoorde** villages, about 10 miles. Roads very bad, a bit tired.

### **April 22<sup>nd</sup>**

9.15 Company drill and inspection by General, then march to baths. Full marching order. False alarm at night.

11.00pm Slept in open field all night awaiting orders. Saw fight in the air, one brought down. We had orders to await the buses to take us to the firing line, but we were not wanted. The night very cold. We have had no bread since 18<sup>th</sup>, only biscuits like iron. Exciting day.

### **April 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Rose at 4am, awaiting orders to go to the front. Omnibuses came about 12 o'clock, took us to wooden huts about 1½ miles from **Ypres**. Slept there the night under artillery fire. No sleep for me, too much noise, but had a lay down in readiness for the next day.

### **April 24<sup>th</sup>**

Rose at 2am to go to the reserve trenches. Got into them about 3.15, dug ourselves in and had to await orders. French came to us about 6 o'clock. Shrapnel bursting a few yards away all time. Left this trench about 10.30 to dig ourselves in again, three miles north of **Ypres**, under very heavy shrapnel fire; also, poisonous fumes. Got orders to move about 4 o'clock to attack German trenches. Terrific artillery and machine gun fire. Lost our Colonel, a Major, & Captain killed and a lot of men killed & wounded. Accomplished our mission, then retired to a wood to rest. Raining heavily

all night, wet through. Water in trenches, too tired to trouble about it. Helped to save the Canadians.....

### **April 25<sup>th</sup>**

Orderd to go to the second line of trenches; got there alright, subjected to a heavy artillery fire, lost a few men wounded while staying there. A Major and Captain wounded. Also had to dig a dug out under heavy shrapnel fire; a bit dangerous – a German had got the right range. Left them about midnight for a rest camp about 4 miles away.

### **April 26<sup>th</sup>**

Arrived at rest huts about 2am. Tired out. Arose 8.00am. Roll call, then easy day, heavy firing around.

### **April 27<sup>th</sup>**

Resting again today, expecting to go into trenches tonight to relieve another regiment – did not go.

### **April 28<sup>th</sup>**

Waiting orders. Today left for the first line of trenches at 7 o'clock; had it a bit rough getting there.

### **April 29<sup>th</sup>**

In the front line of trenches, lost a few more men by shrapnel. Relieved by the **London Rifles Regiment**. Went to some more trenches, 11pm.

### **April 30<sup>th</sup>**

Arrived at fresh trenches about 2am, stayed until 10pm, under very heavy artillery fire all day. Dare not move. Lost a few wounded. Left for more trenches 200 yards off Germans. Arrived at midnight.

### **May 1<sup>st</sup>**

In the front line trenches, easy time, scarcely any firing.

### **May 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Still in same trenches. Trench side fell in, buried me all but head, had to be dug out three of us. Plenty of artillery fire on us again. Left 10pm to dig communication trench to our first line under fire.

### **May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Left communication at 2.30 for dug outs. Stayed in until about 3 o'clock, when they shelled us and started to advance against our first line trench. Terrible fire on our dugs; we had to support **Royal Fusiliers** to repel attack. Retired at 9 o'clock to rest camp near **Ypres**; arrived at 4am.

### **May 4<sup>th</sup>**

Germans shelled us in our rest field, making us run for our lives. My pal wounded badly. Left the other field at 9pm for a barn about 14 miles away. Slept on the roadside in the rain until morning. C. Close wounded.

### **May 5<sup>th</sup>**

Arrived at our barn to rest for the day. Tired out and foot sore.

### **May 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>**

Still in rest camp doing light duty.

### **May 9<sup>th</sup>**

Still in rest camp. Attended Divine Service 10.30, enjoyed it very much. Left camp 1.30 to shelter trench, awaiting orders to move up.

### **May 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>**

Still in shelter trenches.

### **May 12<sup>th</sup>**

Moved nearer firing line, **Ypres**. Had to dig ourselves in again; stayed overnight.

### **May 13<sup>th</sup>**

Shifted through Ypres to some more trenches; raining heavily, trenches full of water.

### **May 14<sup>th</sup>**

Moved up into second line trenches with **Royal Irish Fusiliers**. Had to dig communications trench to firing line at night.

### **May 15<sup>th</sup>**

Still in second line to finish comm trench at night. Snipers busy all time, one wounded.

### **May 16<sup>th</sup>**

Moved to some more trenches near Belgians. Expect to move any minute.

### **May 17<sup>th</sup>**

Moved to some dug outs in a wall at **Ypres**; in a little kennel by myself. All the houses near blown to bits. Plenty of shells flying about.

### **May 18<sup>th</sup>**

Still in the dug out. Had to go on guard in Ypres at Headquarters, 6pm.

### **May 19<sup>th</sup>**

Guard duty up to 6pm, still in dugouts.

### **May 20<sup>th</sup>**

Still in Ypres waiting for dusk to dig trenches near firing line.

### **May 21<sup>st</sup>**

Awakened by two big shells bursting near at 4.15; still in dug outs.

### **May 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Still in Ypres dug out; plenty of shells flying around.

### **May 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Left Ypres at 6pm to go the trenches at **Zillebeke Wood**.

### **May 24<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trenches. Had to go with 2 officers and 5 men to take ammunition to the **Hussars** and **4<sup>th</sup> Yorks Regt** along a dyke up to the body in water and mud. All lucky to get there and back safe. Covered in mud and wet through. Had to go there to support as Germans were breaking through. Hot time of it today. Thanked God when day over.

### **May 25<sup>th</sup>**

In trenches with **16<sup>th</sup> Lancers**, a sniper knocking men down right and left not two yards away. A very warm corner, don't show your head. Left at 9pm to go to the support of **5<sup>th</sup> Lancers**.

### **May 26<sup>th</sup>**

Still with **5<sup>th</sup> Lancers**. Lost one of my pals just after we had breakfast, he had gone to see about his work mate who had just got killed. Poor Tom Stub. We are all very sorry indeed.

### **May 27<sup>th</sup>**

Still with 5<sup>th</sup> Lancers digging communication trench and filling sand bags. Sniping at us all time, about 8 hours.

### **May 28<sup>th</sup>**

Digging communication trench again and filling sand bags. Out 5 hours at this job, hot quarters.

### **May 29<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trenches. Sapping at a cross road near another hot place. Relieved at 9pm to change quarters with A Coy, across the wood in dug outs.

### **May 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup>**

Still in **Zillebeke wood** in dug outs; go out in reliefs to dig and fill sand bags for communication trench to firing line. Snipers busy.

### **June 1<sup>st</sup>**

Still in Zillebeke wood. Left to support 2<sup>nd</sup> Life Guard at 6pm in first line. Came back and went to **3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoon G** [Dragoon Guards?], whose trenches had been blown in. Dug until 2am on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, then relieved. Germans digging themselves in 60 yards away. Hot 5 hours.

### **June 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Left trenches 2.30am to go to a field near **Vlamertinge**; arrived about 6.30.

### **June 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Still in rest field, Vlamertinge.

### **June 5<sup>th</sup>**

Still in rest field, Vlamertinge.

### **June 6<sup>th</sup>**

Leave rest field 7.30 for trenches, arrived about midnight, in dug out.

### **June 7<sup>th</sup>**

In huts near trenches, **Sanctuary wood**. [east of Zillebeke]

### **June 8<sup>th</sup>**

In huts, digging and building communication trench at Sanctuary wood

**June 9<sup>th</sup>**

Moved up into front line trenches near Sant. wood

**June 10<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trenches. Germans blow mine not ten yards off trench. No damage much.

**June 11<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trenches; went to fetch rations and water. Sanctuary wood.

**June 12<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trenches; Germans only 35 yards away in one part of S. Wood.

**June 13<sup>th</sup>**

Still in first trench, Sanctuary wood.

**June 14<sup>th</sup>**

Still in first trench, Sanctuary wood.

**June 15<sup>th</sup>**

Still in first trench, Sanctuary wood.

**June 16<sup>th</sup>**

Still in first trench, attack by British on our left at 4.30. We had to keep Germans busy opposite, so they could not support their defence. We succeeded, attack successful at Hooze.

**June 17<sup>th</sup>**

Still in first trench. Left for a rest camp at 11pm. H. Garman killed and two wounded.

[Private Harry Garman, aged 26, service number 2247, of Great Yarmouth, recorded on the Menin Gate memorial]

**June 18<sup>th</sup>**

Arrived at rest field at 2.30am, about 3 miles from firing line.

**June 19<sup>th</sup>**

In rest field until 8.30. Moved to redoubt Sanctuary wood around 11.30

**June 20<sup>th</sup>**

Still in redoubt, Sanctuary wood front.



### **June 21<sup>st</sup>**

Still in redoubt.

### **June 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Still in redoubt. British attack on our left at **Hooge**. Went for rations; plenty of spare bullets flying around.

### **June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

In redoubt and dug out until midnight, then left for rest camp.

### **June 24<sup>th</sup>**

Arrived at 4am at rest camp near Vlamertinge.

### **June 25<sup>th</sup>**

Left rest camp for village of **Loker** at 8.15am; arrived at 11am in rest huts called Badajoy huts. [SW of Ypres]

### **June 26<sup>th</sup>**

Left Badajoy huts for a field to bivouac at **Dranouter** village. Went for a bath and clean change.

### **June 27<sup>th</sup>**

Still in field. Attended divine service 10.45.

### **June 28<sup>th</sup>**

Still in rest field until 8pm. Moved to trenches at **Messines** around 11pm.

### **June 29<sup>th</sup>**

In the trenches. Lost 4 men killed. Unfortunate accident with bomb thrower. Sergeant Verrey[?] killed, also 1 man, two injured.

### **June 30<sup>th</sup>**

In the trenches. Went for rations 3.30am. Went on listening patrol 9.15, everything alright, risky job.

### **July 1<sup>st</sup>**

Still in the first line trenches.

### **July 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Left the trenches for rest camp near Dranouter at 10.00pm to bivouac. Arrived at midnight.

### **July 3<sup>rd</sup>**

In rest camp; a bit quiet.

### **July 4<sup>th</sup>**

In rest camp; attended divine service at 11am; quiet.

### **July 5<sup>th</sup>**

In camp. Went for a bath and change at 9am. Inspected by General commanding the 2<sup>nd</sup> army corps [to] which we belong, at 3.30.

### **July 6<sup>th</sup>**

Left rest camp for first line trench, only 40 yards away from Germans; arrived about 12.00pm.

### **July 7<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trenches; went for water 10.00pm.

### **July 8<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trench.

### **July 9<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trench.

### **July 10<sup>th</sup>**

Relieved from trench at 10pm; arrived at rest camp 1.30am.

### **July 11<sup>th</sup>**

In rest camp; attended church service and went to baths.

### **July 12<sup>th</sup>**

In rest camp. Physical drill 1 hour, 2 hours company drill. Went out at 7.30pm to put barbed wire up just behind fire trench no.15. Some luck escapes, one RE [Royal Engineer] injured. Left at 1.30am.

### **July 13<sup>th</sup>**

In rest camp. Drew 10 francs out of book, first draw. Physical drill etc.

### **July 14<sup>th</sup>**

Still in rest camp, reveille 6.30, physical drill 7 to 7.45 then route march 10 to 12.

### **July 15<sup>th</sup>**

In rest camp; physical 7 to 7.45, company drill 10 till 12.

### **July 16<sup>th</sup>**

In rest camp; physical 7 to 7.45. Moved to the other side of **Dranouter**. Into barns at 12am.

### **July 17<sup>th</sup>**

Left barn at 8pm for **Armentieres**, arrive about 1am on July 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **July 18<sup>th</sup>**

In cotton factory. Divine service 12.00. Bathe in canal 4pm.

### **July 19<sup>th</sup>**

Still in cotton factory at Armentieres; all parts working except the part we are staying in; a surprise considering we are only 1½ miles from the firing line.

### **July 20<sup>th</sup>**

Still in cotton factory. Physical drill 1 hour and baths at Pont de Heape.

### **July 21<sup>st</sup>**

Still in cotton factory; usual drills.

### **July 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Still in cotton factory; usual drills. Went into Armentieres at night.

### **July 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Still in cotton factory, usual drills. Went for a small route march around Armentieres. On guard at headquarters at 6pm in convent.

### **July 24<sup>th</sup>**

On headquarters guard until 6pm. Left cotton mill at 8.30 to supports [trenches].

### **July 25<sup>th</sup>**

Armentieres asylum. Arrived at asylum in supports, to rest of Brigade. Baths, divine service.

### **July 26<sup>th</sup>**

Still in asylum, on duty. Outgoing pickets went to first line trench at 9pm to carry gravel and sand for concrete. Left at 7am.

### **July 27<sup>th</sup>**

In asylum. Went digging communication t[trench] at 4pm until 8pm; a few shells over, shelling our billet, not much damage.

### **July 28<sup>th</sup>**

Left Armentieres asylum for the first line trench no.75 at 8.30, arrived at 9.30. Guarding a mine and listening patrol.

### **July 29<sup>th</sup>**

In trench; heavily shelled for an hour. 8am Heard and Meadley killed by shell bursting and burning them. Hot time. Had to leave the trench for a hour.

[Private W. Heard 2584, buried at Strand Military Cemetery, Hainaut, Belgium; Private Thomas Malton Meadley 1601, aged 19, buried in the same place, the son of Thomas Malton & Margaret Ann Meadley, of Wincolmlee, Hull.]

### **July 30<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trench no.75 at **Houplin**. Shelled again in afternoon. Knocked parapet down, no one injured.

### **July 31<sup>st</sup>**

In trench 75. Shelled again at 5am. One wounded. Shelled again at 10pm. No injuries.

### **August 1<sup>st</sup>**

Quiet day until 11pm; then alarm, but proved to be false. Had to go out to reconnoitre. Plenty of sandbag filling during day.

### **August 2<sup>nd</sup>**

Still in trench. Started shelling again, one injured, trench blown down.

### **August 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Still in trench; listening post all night. Had a miraculous escape from being shot, through bullet – stopped in sandbag against my face, 8am. Shelled out again from 8.30 until 10am. Relieved from listening post at 9pm to go [to] support trench. On guard all night. 6 men wounded.

### **August 4<sup>th</sup>**

Sergeant Mumby wounded [probably Douglas Mumby, later a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the York & Lancaster Regiment].

Still in trenches. Shelled heavily again – just let us know that the war was still on. Moved just behind first line in support as Company was weak.

### **August 5<sup>th</sup>**

In support trench. Plenty of digging. Had to take rations at night to front line and foot boards, also barbed wire.

### **August 6<sup>th</sup>**

In supports, out digging again. RE fatigue during day and ration at night.

### **August 7<sup>th</sup>**

In supports. Took rations up to fire trench and digging again. Left the trench 9.30 to go to a convent at **Armentieres**. Arrived safely 11am.

### **August 8<sup>th</sup>**

Arrived safe at convent. Day of rest for all C Company.

### **August 9<sup>th</sup>**

Still in convent. Physical drill 7.00-7.45. [word illegible] picket. Mounted guard at HQ at 5.30pm.

### **August 10<sup>th</sup>**

Still in convent on guard until 6pm. Return of the ex wounded men from England, 15 in number, at 5.45pm.

### **August 11<sup>th</sup>**

Still in convent. Reveille 5.30. Route march round by **Equingham Ponte de Hoffe**, back to **Armentieres**, arrive back 9.30am. Easy afterwards.

### **August 12<sup>th</sup>**

Still in convent. Physical drill, company drill 2 hours and lecture. Went into Armentieres at night, 6 to 8.30pm.

### **August 13<sup>th</sup>**

Cleaning all rooms up ready to go to the trenches. Left convent at 8pm, arrived trenches 10.30pm. No.67 trench.

### **August 14<sup>th</sup>**

In trench. 4 hours digging. Brought some sandbags from B company. On guard at night, 7.30pm until 4am Aug 15.

### **August 15<sup>th</sup>**

In trenches. Heavy rain and hail storm from 11am until 12.30pm, trenches flooded out. Went out digging behind fire trench 9pm until 1am. Plenty bullets flying over.

### **August 16<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trench; went to dumping ground for bags and iron sheets at 10am. Rained heavily all afternoon. On guard at night, 7.30 until 4am.

### **August 17<sup>th</sup>**

In trench 67. Out digging 10am until 1pm. Rained again, but dig again 4pm to 6 [illegible], also 9pm to 12pm.

### **August 18<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trench. Out digging 10am to 1.30, then to RE stores. On guard at 7.30pm at **Lille Road** all night.

### **August 19<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trench. On guard at Lille Road opposite German firing line, relieved at 9pm to go in reserve at **Armentieres**.

### **August 20<sup>th</sup>**

In reserve at Rue de Lille school, Armentieres for three days. Day of rest for all. Out digging all night.

### **August 21<sup>st</sup>**

In reserve; inspection at 10.30am by C.O. [commanding officer]. Baths in afternoon. **Ponte de Nieppe**.

### **August 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Officers mess fatigues at 7am and rest of day until 5pm. Left school for trench 70, arrived at 9pm. On sentry [duty] all night, 60 yards across from Germans.

### **August 23<sup>rd</sup>**

In trench 70 on sentry duty. Not so bad. Dibnah wounded. [= Private Robert Dibnah, service number 200497, 1/4<sup>th</sup> E.Yorks Rgt. He enlisted on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1914 and was discharged, probably due to wounds, on 20/12/1917, receiving the silver war badge]

## **August 24<sup>th</sup>**

In trench 70 on sentry duty, bit quiet. General Bush visited us at 10.30am. Artillery duel with whizz bangs [this refers particularly to German howitzers, but was also a general term for German artillery used by British troops which refers to the incoming noise made by the shells before exploding. Much feared due to the very short reaction time one might have].

## **August 25<sup>th</sup>**

Still in trench 70 on sentry duty. A quiet day. Relieved at 9.30pm, arrived at convent 11pm.

## **August 26<sup>th</sup>**

In convent, at rest. Went for a bathe in canal. Went into **Armentieres** from 2 until 4pm.

## **August 27<sup>th</sup>**

Reinforcements today. Route march 6.30 until 8.15 through Armentieres, Ponte de Nieppe. Company drill 1 hour 11 to 12. Rest of day rest. Dropped bombs near us.

## **August 28<sup>th</sup>**

Still in convent. Reveille 6am; went for a bathe 6.30 in canal. Inspection by G.O.C. General Plumer 10.30 at Armentieres baths, Ponte de Nieppe. 4pm shelling near our billets, but not much damage.

## **August 29<sup>th</sup>**

In convent. Having splendid weather. Divine service 3pm, nice sermon. Out in Armentieres at night.

## **August 30<sup>th</sup>**

In convent; went to canal for bathe 6.30am. Route march full pack 10 to 12am. Easy afternoon.

## **August 31<sup>st</sup>**

In convent. Musketry drill [i.e. rifle practice] 7 to 8am. Bathing parade to Rue de Lille baths 9.45. Cleaned rooms up 12.30. Left convent at 7pm for front line – [no.] 80 trench at **Houplines**, arrived 9pm [NE of Armentieres].

## **September 1<sup>st</sup>**

In 80 trench. Firing line, Houplines road, bit quiet. Miserable day, raining all day. On sentry duty.

## **September 2<sup>nd</sup>**

In 80 trench. Still in trench, rained early morning. On sentry duty. Heavy rain all night. Expected an attack by the Germans, did not come off. Got a bad cold.

## **September 3<sup>rd</sup>**

In 80 trench. Still in trench. Raining all day, felt rotten. Went to doctor, got a few tablets, excused duty at night. Had to go digging instead of sentry.

## **September 4<sup>th</sup>**

In trench 80. Went out digging 3 times, rained heavily all afternoon.

## **September 5<sup>th</sup>**

In 80 trench. Rained all morning again and at night expected attack by the Germans; did not come.

## **September 6<sup>th</sup>**

Donaldson [wounded?] [Possibly refers to Arthur Donaldson, 1/4<sup>th</sup> East Yorks 2593]. Still in 80 trench, weather a bit better, went out digging; raining afternoon and a bit at night.

## **September 7<sup>th</sup>**

In trench 80 Houplines, digging in morning, afternoon & night. General & staff visit us in morning. Fine.

## **September 8<sup>th</sup>**

In 80 trench. Digging again. General & staff around again. Fine weather, a few shells over at tea time. No damage. Chas. Saddington shot.

[ The medal card for Private Charles Saddington of the East Yorks Rgt., service numbers 2566, 200671, indicates he arrived in France on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1915. He was evidently not killed on this occasion, as he was disembodied at the end of the war and received the usual three campaign medals].

## **September 9<sup>th</sup>**

In trench 80, digging again all day. Relieved at 8pm to go in reserve, arrived 9.15pm.

## **September 10<sup>th</sup>**

In reserve. Went to baths 10am. Shelling round about. Inspection at 12 of all things.



### **September 11<sup>th</sup>**

In reserve at Hospital Civic, Armentieres. Out drilling 10 to 12 noon, out at 7.30pm taking railway lines up to trench; left after midnight for billets.

### **September 12<sup>th</sup>**

In reserve. Out on 9 mile fatigue; divine service at 12am, inspection by the Brigadier General 12.15. Left for cotton factory 7.30, arrived 8pm.

### **September 13<sup>th</sup>**

In cotton factory. Inspection by Colonel. On fatigue duty, concert at night. Saw fight in the air by British and German aeroplanes. Brought the German down and captured him about ¼ mile away.

### **September 14<sup>th</sup>**

In cotton factory. Company drill [with] bayonet, fight etc. In morning out digging from 6pm until 1.30am. No casualties.

### **September 15<sup>th</sup>**

In cotton factory. Route march 9am until 12an in full marching order. On guard at 6pm, convent.

### **September 16<sup>th</sup>**

In cotton factory; on guard until 6pm at headquarters.

### **September 17<sup>th</sup>**

In cotton factory. Inspection at 9am by General and staff. Went to baths at 11am.

### **September 18<sup>th</sup>**

In cotton factory; on Q.M. [Quartermaster] Sergeant fatigue all day. Left at 7pm for 67 trench.

### **September 19<sup>th</sup>**

In 67 support trench, fine weather. On RE fatigue and company rations at 8pm.

### **September 20<sup>th</sup>**

In 67 s[upport], on R.E. fatigue 9.30 to 11.30. Bombardment by our artillery 4pm to 5.30pm. Out fitting barbed wire at 7.45pm to 10.30pm.

### **September 21<sup>st</sup>**

In 67s. Bombardment on our right all morning, duel between artillery opposite us. Heavy bombardment at night by us. On guard at Leith Walk Comm[unication trench].] 6pm.

### **September 22<sup>nd</sup>**

In 67 support. On guard until 6pm. Turned out for RE, not wanted.

### **September 23<sup>rd</sup>**

In 67s. Heavy bombardment on our right. Duel opposite us at 10am. On digging during daytime. Out at night until midnight. Carry straw to firing line.

### **September 24<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s digging and carrying sandbags all day. Expecting some trouble from the Germans. Went for rations at night.

### **September 25<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s. Up at 3.30 all ready for an attack on German trenches, in fighting order. Heavy bombardment by both sides from 4am to 8am. Attack not needed, successful attack on our left front by the Indians and Berks Rgt. Quiet at noon, shelled again at tea time. On guard at night. [.....] walk 9m.

### **September 26<sup>th</sup>**

In support 67T. Another shelling by Germans 5am until 7am, again at noon and tea time. No casualties.

### **September 27<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s. Shelled again at 5am until 6am, two wounded, on RE fatigue 10am. Quiet at night, out putting up barbed wire behind 67 support. No casualties.

### **September 28<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s. Bit quiet in morning, a few whizz bangs over at noon, quiet after. Rained heavy [at] night.

### **September 29<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s. Quiet up to noon. Rain heavy all day. Out on RE stores 2.30pm. Out putting barbed wire at rear of Frith Walk. Raining heavily all night. Out from 7pm until 12pm.

### **September 30<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s, out digging 10am to 12am. Out again 2pm to 4pm, pretty quiet. On guard Frith Walk 6pm 12 hours.

### **October 1<sup>st</sup>**

In 67s digging 11 to 1 and 2-4. Out digging again 5.30 to 11pm.

### **October 2<sup>nd</sup>**

In 67s. Digging 11 to 1, 2 to 4pm. Out putting barbed wire 7 to 11.45.

### **October 3<sup>rd</sup>**

In 67s. On RE stores 10.30 to 12.30 and 2pm to 4.30pm. Out digging new communications trench behind [illegible] from 6.15 to 10.30.

### **October 4<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s digging 10 to 12 and 2 to 4pm. Out 7.15pm until 10.30 on RE fatigues.

### **October 5<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s, out digging 9.30 to 12, then 2-4, then out from 7pm until 11.30pm on listening patrol between both lines. Got back safe.

### **October 6<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s, out digging 11 to 12.30, 3 to 4, 5 to 8pm in communications trench, Hull Road.

### **October 7<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s, digging 9.30-12.00, cleaning the trench and dug outs at 2-4pm, relieved at 7.30pm to go to asylum.

### **October 8<sup>th</sup>**

In asylum. On officer's fatigues until 4.30pm.

### **October 9<sup>th</sup>**

Asylum. Ordered to move 10am. Physical drill 10 to 11.30. Moved [at] 12 to **Armentieres**, fresh billets.

### **October 10<sup>th</sup>**

In warehouse, Armentieres. Divine service [ at] 12. Left billets at 6.15 for 72 trench, arrived 7.30. On sentry duty.

### **October 11<sup>th</sup>**

In 72 trench. On sentry duty until 6pm. Out on listening post 6pm until 11.15. Machine guns and rifles turned on us, lucky to escape.

### **October 12<sup>th</sup>**

In 72 trench, on sentry duty until 6pm. Out [at] listening post for 5 hours at night.

### **October 13<sup>th</sup>**

In 72 trench, on listening post at night. Heavy bombardment by our artillery and reply by the Germans 2pm until 5pm. P.L. Miller killed. [Not identified].

### **October 14<sup>th</sup>**

In 72 trench. Bombardment at 2.30 until 5pm. A few more casualties. On listening post all night.

### **October 15<sup>th</sup>**

In 72 trench, bit quiet on our front. On listening post, shelled and machine guns, rifles etc. sent over while out at 7.45 and midnight, then again 3am on 16<sup>th</sup>. Very luck indeed to escape injury.

### **October 16<sup>th</sup>**

In 72 trench. Shelled again and machine gunned. Set on at 10am and then again at 4pm. Relieved at 7.15, arrived at billets 8.30.

### **October 17<sup>th</sup>**

In billets, **Armentieres**. On guard until 1pm.

### **October 18<sup>th</sup>**

In billets, Armentieres. Inspection by G.O.C. 10am, bath 2pm. Marched to 70 trench 6.15, arrived 7.30.

### **October 19<sup>th</sup>**

In 70 trench. Worst trench we have been in. On sentry duty, shelled at 10am, whizz bangs and machine gun fire.

### **October 20<sup>th</sup>**

In 70 trench. On sentry duty; a quiet day.

### **October 21<sup>st</sup>**

In 70 trench, on sentry duty. Out on ration fatigues, company [word illegible, ending in man] injured at dump. Pretty quiet day. Machine guns turned on us in dump.

### **October 22<sup>nd</sup>**

In 70 trench, on sentry duty. Quiet up to 2. A small artillery duel to 4pm.

### **October 23<sup>rd</sup>**

In 70 trench on sentry duty. Quiet until 4pm. Slight bombardment by our RFA [Royal Field Artillery]. No reply.

### **October 24<sup>th</sup>**

In 70 trench on sentry duty. Quiet again. Few shells sent over by our RFA. Relieved at 7pm, arrived at billets 9pm.

### **October 25<sup>th</sup>**

In billets, **Armentieres**. Picked to represent the company on guard inspection, along with 14 of our company. Two drills.

### **October 26<sup>th</sup>**

In billets. Inspected by C.O. [commanding officer], ready for big inspection. Company to proceed to trenches tonight. Shifted our billets for one night.

### **October 27<sup>th</sup>**

Got ready to proceed to **Bailleul** [NW of Armentieres] for inspection by the King and staff. Rode down in motor buses 12 noon, inspected 3 o'clock, everything went off all right. Returned at 5.30 to Armentieres. Forward to trenches at 7.30pm, arrived 9.15. Raining heavily, but [illegible] in 67....splendid sight, aeroplanes overhead during inspection. New coat issued.

### **October 28<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s. Raining heavy. Out digging 10 to 2, rained all day. Pretty quiet.

### **October 29<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s. All out digging 8.30 to 12, few whizz bangs over at noon and afternoon. Out digging at 9pm, in front of our firing line till 12pm. No casualties, weather fine.

### **October 30<sup>th</sup>**

In 67s, fine weather. Digging 11am to 12.30, then 2 to 3.30, out at night 9pm, returned 10.30. Not wanted for digging. Fine night.

### **October 31<sup>st</sup>**

In 67s. Out digging 10.30 to 12.30. Dull weather, rained in afternoon; quiet nearly all day.

### **November 1<sup>st</sup>**

In 67s, dull, raining heavily all day and night. Relieved 7.30, arrived at billets 9pm.

## **November 2<sup>nd</sup>**

In billets, **Armentieres**. Baths at 3.15, raining heavily all day.

## **November 3<sup>rd</sup>**

In billets, warehouse, Armentieres. Inspection 10.30 am of iron rations, rifles etc. Proceed to trenches 5pm, arrived at 72 support 7pm.

## **November 4<sup>th</sup>**

In 72 support on guard, communication trench. Bit quiet in morning. Plenty of shells over in afternoon until 5pm. On guard all night again. Fine weather.

## **November 5<sup>th</sup>**

In 72s on guard duty. Bit dull. Few shells over in morning. Opened rapid fire at 7.20 until 7.40, Hun retaliated.. Lucky to miss injury. Our artillery shelled them again 1.45am on the 6<sup>th</sup>; no reply. Must have been celebrating Guy Fawkes night.

## **November 6<sup>th</sup>**

In 72. On guard. Fine day, but cold. Pretty quiet all day and night.

## **November 7<sup>th</sup>**

In 72s, on guard central Av[rest of word illegible]. Issued with new caps. Pretty quiet up to 2pm. Fine day. Heavy shells sent over by us and the Germans. No casualties. Germans seem to be shelling Armentieres.

## **November 8<sup>th</sup>**

In 72s on guard. Fine day. Heavy shells sent over by both sides; a few casualties in A Company. A duel between our artillery and Huns a[rillery] continued all day at periods and night time as well.

## **November 9<sup>th</sup>**

In 72s on guard. Dull and windy day. Heavy shelling by our artillery and the Germans. Sent about 20 to their 1 over. Quite a change for our lot. Relieved at 7pm in very bad weather. Arrived at billets 8.30, raining[?]

## **November 10<sup>th</sup>**

Moving to fresh billets near **Bailleul** [NW of Armentieres], in farmhouse, for a week or two's rest. Set out 9.30, arrived at [word illegible] parade ground for dinner 12.30, arrived destination 3.30.

### **November 11<sup>th</sup>**

In billets at farmhouse. Inspection of everything and physical drill. Rained heavily at night.

### **November 12<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run in morning, 7am, then route march through Bailleul from 10am to 1pm. Raining all day. Wet through and class this as a rest.

### **November 13<sup>th</sup>**

A short run 7am to 7.30. Small run again 11.30 to 12. Raining heavily all day; cleared at night.

### **November 14<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short walk and run 7.45 to 8.15. Fine, frosty day. Divine service 11.30, about 2 miles away in field.

### **November 15<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Out for short run 7 to 7.30. Section and company drill 10 to 12. Baths at 1pm, returned 4.15. Bailleul baths.

### **November 16<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 7 to 7.30. Fall in [at] 8.40. On alarm post with battalion, then marched to company parade ground for section drill until 12.45pm. Fine, frosty day. Physical drill 2pm to 4pm. HQ [illegible] in **Meteren** at night [a village west of Bailleul].

### **November 17<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run and march 7 to 7.30. Company drill 9.30 to 11am, then short route march for 1 hour; rain and hailstorm, so returned. Played rugby for no.10 platoon, lost to no.12 platoon. In Meteren at night.

### **November 18<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 7 to 7.30. Company and section drill 9.30 to 12.15. Played soccer with 12 platoon. Lost again. Rained heavily.

### **November 19<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 7 to 7.30. Company drill 9.30 to 11am. Then route march up to 12.30. Football match 2.45 with RE's; lost.

## **November 20<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 7 to 7.30. Company drill 9.30 to 12.15 on guard at billets at 4.30. Fine night, but cold.

## **November 21<sup>st</sup>**

In barn. On guard until 4.30pm. Fine, but cold.

## **November 22<sup>nd</sup>**

In barn. Short run 7 to 7.30. Company drill 9.30 to 11am. Then bath; route march 2 to 4pm.

## **November 23<sup>rd</sup>**

In barn. Short run 6.30 to 7am. Fall in, company parade ground 8.30, for route march with rest of Brigade. Inspected by General Plumer and staff at **Outtersteene** [village SW of Bailleul]. Returned at 2pm[?]. Then turn out for physical drill at 2.45pm until 3.45. Fine day.

## **November 24<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 7 to 7.30. Company training and practicing trenches, also skirmishing drill, 9.30 until 1pm. Fine day.

## **November 25<sup>th</sup>**

In barn, short run 7 to 7.30am. Route march through **Merville** and **Fletre** district [SW and NW of Bailleul respectively, so effectively a circular route], 8.30 to 2pm. Bit tired when finished. Muddy roads, slight rain, about 12 miles.

## **November 26<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 7 to 7.30. Snowing and sleet. Company drill [for] 1 hour, then attack on farmhouse near[by?] Snowing heavily, wet through. Returned 1pm. Frosty at night.

## **November 27<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 7 to 7.30. Inspection of all our kit and equipment until 11am and then company drill and lecture on frostbite in Meteren at night. Fine day.

## **November 28<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 7.45 to 8. Divine service 11.30. Fine day, really cold and frosty.

## **November 29<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 7 to 7.30. Raining all day. Short lecture on taking trenches and practice taking trench 1.45 to 3.15pm.



### **November 30<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 7 to 7.30am. Short march through **Outtersteene** 1pm to 3.30pm. Wet afternoon. Had to charge over ploughed fields, ankle deep in mud. Compliment on attack [presumably from officer]. Rain at night.

### **December 1<sup>st</sup>**

In barn. Raining heavily, no run. Stopped raining. Out for a practice in attack on farmhouse 1700 yards away, 10am until 12.30. Football match between officers and 4<sup>th</sup> Yorks officers. East Yorks won 1-0.

### **December 2<sup>nd</sup>**

In barn. Short run 6.30 to 7. Forced route march 8.30 to 1.15pm through [place name illegible, perhaps **Meteren**], **Caestre**, **Pradelles**, **Strazeele** [i.e. a triangular route NW and W of Bailleul]. Never saw so many men fall out on a march. Dog tired. Raining heavily all night. On guard 4.30pm until 6am.

### **December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

In barn. On guard until 6am. Fall in 8.30 for route march with Battalion. Raining heavily, had to come back 10am. Turn out 5.30 alarm. Returned 6pm.

### **December 4<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Raining heavily all morning. Stand to from 8.30 until 11am, then out on alarm post. March to Outtersteene in teeming rain, returned 1.30pm.

### **December 5<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 7.30 to 8. Fine morning. Divine service 11.30. Rained at night and windy.

### **December 6<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 6.30 to 7. Stand to from 8.30 for rain to stop for Battalion attack. Attack [word illegible], lecture and judging distance until 12.45. Rained heavily at night.

### **December 7<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 6.30 to 7am. Fell in for route march 9.30 to 11.30. Went to baths 2.45, returned 5pm. Fine morning, rained heavy in afternoon and at night.

### **December 8<sup>th</sup>**

In barn. Short run 6.30am to 7am. Fall in 8.30 for short route march with Battalion. Then started to make an attack on farmhouse about 1½ miles away, until 1pm. Fine day.

## December 9<sup>th</sup>

In barn. Short run 6.30 to 7. Fell in 8.15 to go on Brigade route march. Returned 11.15 on account of rain. Raining all day.

## December 10<sup>th</sup>

In barn. Short run 7 to 7.30. Company drill 9.15 to 10.15. Raining heavily. Bits from Captain's diary 11.30 to 1pm

Rifle no. 1048 Bolt 72876

Bayonet 933 Equipment 184

Kit 588

## December 11<sup>th</sup>

In barn. Short run 6.30 to 7. Route march 8.30 with Battalion to 12.15. Football match 2.15 – played with Battalion against officers and Sergeants, lost 16-3. Good game. Raining all day. Country and roads all flooded.

## December 12<sup>th</sup>

In barn. Short run. Divine service 10.15. Fine morning, but cold. On guard at 4.30 until 6am. [Illegible word].

## December 13<sup>th</sup>

In barn. Route march 9.15 to 11am. Then inspection of everything until 12.00. Fine day, football in afternoon.

[The remaining entries from December 14<sup>th</sup> to December 30<sup>th</sup> are written on loose sheets inserted into the back of the diary].

## December 14<sup>th</sup>

In barn. Short run 6.30 to 7am. Bath. Route march **through Merris[?], Vieux-Berquin, Strazeele**, returned 12.45. Fine day, frosty. Football [in] afternoon.

## December 15<sup>th</sup>

In barn. Reveille 6am, breakfast 6.30. Went to baths 7am, **Bailleul**, returned 10.15. 11am company drill. Football in afternoon versus D company. Two balls burst, 0-0 when we stopped.

## December 16<sup>th</sup>

In barn. Short run 6.30 to 7. Route march to **Merris** and **Outtersteene**, then inspection of trenches. Raining.

## **December 17<sup>th</sup>**

We moved from barn at Bailleul to huts at Dickebusch [= **Dikkebus**, SW of Ypres?]. Set off for station at Bailleul 9am, entrained 12.30, arrived **Poperinge** 3pm. Reached huts 6.30. Raining heavily all day. Camp in a terrible muddy state. Wet through and dog tired.

## **December 18<sup>th</sup>**

On guard 9am at water supply depot, Dickebusch. Fine day, but cold. Bombardment going on all afternoon.

## **December 19<sup>th</sup>**

On guard water supply depot. Attacked by Germans near here. Sent gas over, two of our guard slightly gassed; went to hospital and got treated alright. After heavy bombardment by both sides all morning, relieved at noon by 5<sup>th</sup> Yorks [1/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Yorkshire Regiment] of guard. Left for the trenches 5pm, arrived 1am in a terrible condition, with rain and mud. Shelled heavily all way.

## **December 20<sup>th</sup>**

In A2 trench, near Hill 60. Shelled all day and night; trenches full of water. Rain heavy all day and night. Very lucky.

## **December 21<sup>st</sup>**

In A2 trench. Shelled again all day. Weather very cold and wet. A & B companies shelled badly. Raining again; plenty of work pumping the water out of the trenches. Not so much shell fire. Bad light. A few casualties.

## **December 22<sup>nd</sup>**

In A2 trench. Fine in morning, but cold. Rained again in afternoon and night. Shelled again; all sorts of sausages etc., a few more casualties. Lots of men sent to hospital with bad feet [**"Trench foot"**, caused by long spells standing in water, was a common problem for men in the trenches, especially early in the war and could cause long term/permanent disablement. **"Sausages"** is probably an ironic reference to German mortar bombs ].

## **December 23<sup>rd</sup>**

In A2 trench. Very cold. More rain. Slight shelling. Relieved at 7.30 to go to rest huts about 10 miles back. Country flooded and roads in a terrible state. Men dog tired when arrived at huts at 11.30pm.

### **December 24<sup>th</sup>**

In rest huts, Dickebusch. Inspection of helmets, also feet. Raining heavily. Miserable surroundings for a Christmas. Trying to keep cheerful; had a little sing song at night.

### **December 25<sup>th</sup>**

In rest huts. Miserable morning, rain again. Church service in camp. On fatigues. Issue of cig[arettes] and 3 apples each. No firing heard round here. Rain at night; not a very bright Christmas for me.

### **December 26<sup>th</sup>**

In rest huts. Fine morning. Inspection of rifles and [word illegible] helmets. Quiet day. Church service at 5.45. Slight rain in afternoon.

### **December 27<sup>th</sup>**

In huts, Dickebusch. Rainy morning, on fatigues. Inspection of rifles and [word illegible] helmets 10am. Fell in at 2.30 to proceed to trenches, arrived at 7pm. Fine weather and good journey up to trenches.

### **December 28<sup>th</sup>**

In A2 trench, **Zillebeke wood**. Fine day. Digging and pumping water out of trenches. Heavy shelling nearly all day, especially in afternoon.

### **December 29<sup>th</sup>**

In A2 trench. Fine day, but cold. Very heavy artillery duel lasting all day. Very lucky to escape injury; a few shells over at night and sausages as well. A dozen of our aeroplanes went over the German lines opposite us at noon, under very heavy fire and returned about one hour later. A splendid sight, being such a clear day. Rained at night.

### **December 30<sup>th</sup>** (final entry)

In A2 trench. Dull morning, bit quieter than the last two days; at noon, [a] few whizz bangs seen.