

WAR DIARY OF BANDMASTER JOHN A REID
HEADQUARTERS COMPANY
23rd BATTALION
6th INFANTRY BRIGADE
A.I.F

1915 - 1916

I have undertaken to transcribe this diary because of my interest in the uncle I would have loved to have met but never did. A more practical reason for the transcription is that the original diary, written largely in pencil, has begun to fade with time.

I have tried to transcribe it quite literally though I have corrected some spelling. This may sound rather presumptuous, especially when you pick up the mistakes I have made.

In the interests of time I have succumbed to abbreviations, and these are indicated early in the text (Band Practice = BP). There are also occasions when the writing has so faded that it is difficult to read. Occasionally I have attempted an interpretation and followed it with (?), at others I have simply left a blank with a (?).

There is nothing spectacular about the events portrayed, at times life would have been rather boring for Jack Reid, but underneath we are reminded of both the heroic and the absurdity of war. I hope this diary is a gesture in peace.

Stuart A Reid 1983 & 2003

I am starting this diary on 4/2/15, so I am going to make a brief summary of the happenings up to that date.

The 23rd & 24th Battalions (Btn.) left Victoria on TSS Euripidies on Saturday 8th May at 3pm, but did not leave the bay until 11am on Monday 9th. We did not touch land again until we reached Albany and then did not go within 5 miles.

I was fairly sick nearly all the way, but got better as soon as we sighted land. The band played on the sun deck on sighting land. We left the bay the same night. Our next port was Colombo on Tuesday 25/5/15 at 7.30am. Some of us took French leave. A splendid city with lovely buildings and gardens.

About forty were arrested. Three deaths reported up to now. Left at 5.30am on the 27/5/15. Rained heavily on the 26th. We played "Goodbye Little Girl" in the rain.

Cheers from the city.

Next port was Suez. We stayed until we could get through the Canal. The journey up the Red Sea was very hot. The trip through the canal was very interesting. Soldiers, mostly Indians camped all along. Put in at Port Said for a day and night. Reached Alexandria where we landed on 12th June. We were eleven weeks camped at Heliopolis near Cairo. I spend a very interesting time on the whole. We were in Egypt for eleven weeks.

We boarded the S.S. Haverford on Sunday 29th. August and got to Limnos Island on 2nd. September. On the way the S.S. Southland was torpedoed in sight of our ship. This was a notorious incident and gave our brigade a name. We were at Limnos three days and boarded the patrol ship Partridge, on Saturday 4th. Moved for the front as ordered.

We arrived at our destination about 1pm on Sunday morning, the bullets flew around us as we were landing but were only strays. We took over Lone Pine on Monday 7th Sept. I was attached to 16th Coy's dressing station. There were many interesting little happenings which I will not set down here. The 23rd & 24th Btn. experienced the worst bombardment on the Peninsular on Sunday 29th. Nov. On the Saturday snow had fallen and it was bitterly cold. The casualties of the two battalions were 243. The evacuation of Gallipoli started on 18th. Dec.

I was with the last party to leave on the 19th. We got off scot free. We moved to Limnos arriving on the 20th and leaving on the 9th. Jan. Then from Limnos to Alexandria arriving there on 12th Jan. We camped at the Tel El Kebir, 64 miles from Cairo from 13th. Jan to 2nd. Feb. This diary dates from then.

1916.

February

Thurs. 3. Left camp at 6pm, entrained to Ismailia, marched 5½ miles to camp across sand, camped all night, very tired. Instruments and pack too much to manage.

4. Broke camp at 10am. Long and weary march with the 24th's. Arrived at destination 3pm. Had a drink of tea and slept in the open. Got on better with load today.

5. Band practice (BP) afternoon and morning. Raining toward night. Sending a letter to mother if time. Awake all night with a cough. Had own tent again to sleep in. It was pretty warm making us carry packs and instruments here.

Sun. 6. Church parade (CP) in morning. Program for officers in afternoon. Bogus court martial of chaplain. Officers played drums and symbols. Brigadier at CP tells us our job here.

7. Mess orderly. Put up tents in the morning. BP in afternoon. Food rather short.

8. Stretcher drill (SD) in morning. BP in afternoon. Full issue of bread, but other food very light. Company kicked up a row about the food.

9. SD and BP. Very decent food. Looking forward to mail, supposed to be at D.H.Q.
10. BP and SD. Started a new selection with solo in it. Very good food, plenty of bread. Football after tea.
11. SD in the morning, rifle drill in the afternoon. Band forbidden to play. Football after tea.
12. Orderly duties in the morning. Helped make a platform for tonight's concert and helped build a stadium. Going to concert tonight.
13. Sunday. CP in the morning. Played at 22nd Btn. afterwards. Good feed at officer's mess for tea. Had a royal time. Going again next Sunday if possible.
14. Building stadium in morning. BP in the afternoon. Good boiled rice for tea. Wally H pinched my wallet then returned it.
15. Fine day, building stadium all day. Had an alarm about 9 at night. Congratulated by the Brigadier for our fast work. Rather heavy walking.
16. Rather windy. Teaching the new drummer in morning. BP in the afternoon.
17. Nice day. Had a good yarn with Colonel at the practice. Had BP in the afternoon.
18. Frid. Drum practice morning. BP in the afternoon. Route march in afternoon, could see the canal and shipping plainly. Rumours of Turks about.
19. Hard to stand to at 5.30 this morning. Turks supposed to be near. Practice for inspection by Sir A Murray tomorrow. I see plainly that to get stripes from my present position, I would have to crawl, so I will stay as I am.
20. CP this morning. Lecture by General Sir A Murray on Australians and discipline. Hinted that we might be going to France.
21. Teaching new drummers in the morning. BP in the afternoon and played some of our wounded chaps back to the battalion. Carrol & Kent (?) arrived.
22. BP in the morning. Building stadium in the afternoon. Playing in cribbage tournament in the evening. Rumours of fighting in the North Sea.
23. BP morning and afternoon. Two bouts in stadium. Middle weights won by Fitzgerald and Devlin. Two good bouts. Football after tea.
24. Orderly in the morning. SD for the remainder of Band. BP Route march tomorrow night.
25. BP in the morning. Half day off. Route march from 5 O'clock in afternoon to 11pm at night. Hard marching coming home.
26. BP and SD. Football to fill in time. Heard of Jack Berry's death, which we were very sorry to hear of. I wrote to Berry's mother on behalf of the boys.
27. Sun. CP in the morning. Good sermon. Program in afternoon while the football was on. Officers and sergeants won by the former.
28. SD in morning, BP in afternoon. Three good bouts in stadium. Paid 1.50 PT. Heard we were to leave for France in fortnight.
29. BP all day. Rumour of great German victory. Russians going well. Allies lose heavily. Germany draws her last 50,000 men.

March

1. SD and BP. The victory was for the Allies not for the Germans. Good program at stadium.

2. Horrible day. SD in morning. Afternoon parade cancelled. Colonel tells us we are to go to France shortly and expects big things of us.
3. Went shooting in the morning but had to come back on account of dust, went again in the afternoon. The wind was nearly as bad as in the morning.
4. SD in morning. BP in the afternoon. Young Hayes was knocked about badly in stadium. Took some time to recover. We thought Hayes was done for. We are to leave here for Ferry Port on Monday as rumour says.
5. Sun. Hayes died this morning. He had diseased heart and kidneys. He had compound fracture of skull. CP in the morning. Played B.Coy football in afternoon.
6. BP & SD. Expect to leave here tomorrow. Very hot today. Hope we have a better day to march through.
7. Packed things and left camp around 9.30. We carried rifles, equipment and instruments and played along the road. Arrived at Ferry Port about 11am. Very hot all day.
8. Crossed Canal about 10 O'clock and got new rifles and ordinance. Lovely march through Ishmaelia. Great reception by the residents. Arrived at Mooskir at about 3pm.
9. BP and played the troops out, was inoculated a triple dose against typhoid. Today was a grand day not too hot. We don't expect to be here too long.
10. Another nice day. Felt a little off after the inoculation. BP during the day. Went for a walk over to the aerodrome and to the 13th Light Horse. A Squadron is accompanying us to France.
11. Sat. Played troops to and from Nafieke station. BP all day. Had a long talk with D Pye just returned from England where he had a good holiday. Pye was lucky to get away from the Peninsular when he did. I don't think he should have been sent back again.
12. Sun. CP in the morning. Had our clothes fumigated in the after-noon and went for a swim. We are to leave on Wednesday by the rumours.
13. BP nearly all day. Played troops out in the morning and afternoon. Splendid weather but rather warm. The BM (Band Master) is busy with the new equipment.
14. Reveille at 5am this morning. Route march to ordinance and back. I had to play all the way and was fairly tired after it. We did the march in splendid time.
15. Inspection by General Birdwood and staff. The men did very well. I went up and had a talk with Mr. St-----(?) He looks splendid.
16. Played the Battalion to and from the station in the morning. Holiday in the afternoon. Played a few marches after tea. Men have gone out on night manoeuvres.
17. Nice day but rather warm. Went to see Capt. Stewart who leaves with the 21st tomorrow. Massed BP for inspection and CP on Sunday.
18. Terribly dusty and windy. Massed BP in the morning for reception of the Prince of Wales who arrived in the afternoon. A light shower half an hour before he arrived settled the dust. The (General Birdwood and staff were present) brigade turned out splendidly and gave the Prince a hearty welcome. He was a fine looking lad, but very young. 21st, 22nd and A Coy. of 23rd left last night. We leave tomorrow night.
19. Sun. We were busy all day packing up. Were inoculated and made me rather ill. Band played programs morning and afternoon. Left camp at 6am and entrained

for Alexandria. The train journey from Morsca to Alexandria was rotten. We were in cattle trucks without springs, so had a rather rough trip. It took us over 9 hrs and we had no sleep the whole while, was glad to set foot on solid ground again.

20. Arrived at boat at day break and embarked on SS Michigan. I was mess orderly today. Left quay at 2.30. Rather rough outside the Bay. Light cruiser ahead.

21. Nice day but still a little rough. Cruiser still ahead and dodging across the front of us. Must be our convoy. Band played in afternoon. Two other ships in sight. Food fairly good but scarce.

22. Fine weather all day. The ships in sight all day. Destroyer passed and warned us about a submarine at 11am in the morning. Another passed at 1.30. BP in the morning. Program in afternoon.

23. Grand weather. Several ships passed. Light cruiser passed at midday. Submarine sighted. Passed Malta 8 o'clock Friday morning.

24. Lovely weather all day. Several ships passed during the day. At midday we sighted land ahead and to starboard 2pm, we could see it was inhabited. More land to port at 6pm.

25. Nice weather. Several ships sighted during the day. Passed several small islands during the morning and sighted Sardinia in the afternoon. At 5 o'clock in the evening we sighted Corsica. We are now sailing NW and expect to land tomorrow.

26. Sun. The weather is still splendid. At 8am we sighted land. After dinner we were close in. Had a kit inspection in the morning. Disembarked at 4.30, on the pier till 7.30.

27. Entrained at 9 last night and travelled nearly all night. Rather cold today, passed through Valence and had a great reception, passed through Lyons about 4pm travelling toward Paris.

28. Very cold today, Paris country very pretty, flatter than southern France. People very enthusiastic. Travelling along the Seine. 22km turned toward Calais at ----(?). Raining a lot today.

29. Wed. Extremely cold, breakfast. detrained, marched about 6km to Wittes. Billeted on a farm, very comfortable. Expect mail and pay tomorrow. Transports (motor) passing through all day to firing line.

30. Had a lovely bed of straw last night, was loathe to leave it, but had no option and was pulled out. Went for a short route march in the morning. Cannonading heard. BP in the afternoon. Five mile walk after tea.

31. Up about 7 this morning. Weather rather dull. Marched about a mile with battalion this morning. Helped the farmer whose barn we were in to clean up the yard and stables. All the battalion are working in the village this after noon.

April

1. Sat. Up at 7.30. Played in village. A splendid day. Marched battalion to parade ground. Practice with gas helmet. Squadron of twelve aeroplanes sighted. Kit inspection. Football after tea. The men are much dissatisfied about their pay. The last pay of 150 P 2.? was paid at the desert, Canal Zone. That is a month ago. It's about time we got another, they have promised it long enough.

2. Sun. Lovely morning. CP cancelled. Played in village in the morning. Paid 80

francs in the afternoon. Went for a stroll after tea.

3. Played in village in morning. No morning parade. Party of 60 men marched to Aire for a hot bath and change of underclothes. Aire is a very decent place. Transports part of A Coy. arrived.

4. Played battalion to parade ground. Told that we move to firing line on Thursday. Lecture on our job there by Colonel.

5. Long route march in morning. Band played as usual. Emshied(?) in Aire in afternoon and bought a few things. Young lady gave me a ring.

6. Played the battalion as far as Aire where we marched passed the Btn. staff. No parade this afternoon. Cleaned instruments & got ready to move out tomorrow.

7. Up at 7am. Breakfast and got our packs and blankets ready. Lunch at 11am. Moved off from Wittes 1pm. Touched Aire through several villages to Havusquirke, arrived 7pm. Had a brawl and both fell into the water.

8. Moved off next morning about 9am, through Mirville (?) to Saily (?) an hour ----(?) and lunch. Moved off at 12.30. Arrived at destination 3pm. Only small village. I did not feel this march very much. My socks were a bit rough but nothing else troubled me. The guns are very plain now. We have seen a lot of the new army, they are only bantams(?) but carry big packs and march well. Two Zeplins sighted.

9. Sun. Up at 8.30. Flak overhead, heavily shelled but got clear. CP 3pm. Signals moved off 1pm. Walked into Saily with Sergeant Lear and went to church at soldiers club.

10. Packed all our gear and band instruments. Part of -----(?) arrived during the day. Moved off with B Coy at 4.30 to firing line. Arrived about 7pm. Very cold night. Five in a very small dug out.

11. Up early had a look around. Very quiet everywhere. Posted to platoon with Serg. Baillie. Pretty lonely in the afternoon. Plenty of artillery fire in the afternoon. Rained during the day, ground very sloppy.

12. Wakened at stand to 6am. Had a snack of bread & cheese for breakfast. Read old letters. Much impressed by Frank's (*older brother*). Got rations in afternoon. Spent afternoon and evening with JB. Had a good tea. Rained heavily all day.
I Samuel 20.

13. Up at about 8am. Had a snack and went to draw rations. With JB nearly all afternoon. Two men killed and three wounded today. No rain though, not much sun. Ground dried up well. Revelation 1.

14. Frid. Up at about 10am, had breakfast. Weather still dull rained during the night. Went for rations, only bread & cheese supplied. Patrol going out to investigate lights reported by Serg. Baillie. Revelation 2.

15. Up at about 10am, had light breakfast (very light). Went to draw rations. A little snow fell about 10.30. Packed up 2pm. Had tea with JB. Germans destroyed a house to the rear of our tent. -----(?) up 6pm. Left trenches for billets at 10pm. The work in the trenches is pretty heavy when it comes, but thank goodness that is not often. I had an easy time in supports the last relief. We are in good billets now. Revelation 3.

16. Sun. Up pretty late. Went for rations & breakfast. Visited the village cemetery in which there are a number of soldiers buried. The cemetery is badly knocked about. Rained towards evening. Revelation 4.

17. Up about 9am. Good issue of dry rations today. The sergeants -----(?) for a lot. Rain off and on, ground very sloppy. Wrote letters and sent away post cards. Saw Capt. Stewart. Revelation 5.
18. Up late again, still raining. Had an exciting bit of detective work after a spy. Hope to get him later. Expecting mail soon. Revelation 6.
19. Up fairly late. Still raining. Reported for fatigues at 5pm, finished 3.30am Thurs. Had a very rough time and got covered in mud. Slept well when we got to bed. Ezekiel 39.
20. Did not wake up until 9am, had breakfast. Busy all day cleaning our clothes, rifles and equipment. Not so much rain today, a little sun. Expecting more mail tonight. Revelation 7.
21. (Good Friday) Nice weather until about 6pm and rained all night. Relieved 24th. Btn at 1.30. Had a rotten trip, the duckboards were slimy and we slipped all the way up. Revelation 8.
22. Very sunny day. Very light issue of day rations, but the wet rations were good. We hear that the 8th Brigade has gone to England to represent us on Anzac day. This is a great injustice and has caused much discontent among the older men. The 8th Brigade have never fired a shot in action. Surely the heads could have done better than this. Revelation 9.
23. Sun. Fine day. Two casualties in supports. Heavy bombardment by us 3pm. Germans blew up some of our ammunition. Purnell and I sent down to support. Revelation 10.
24. Beautiful day, Gave the ground a chance to clear up. Rations very light. Aeroplanes very active and heavily shelled by enemy. Revelation 11.
25. Still beautiful weather, a little water left in the gaps. We found out who was getting down on our rations. German battery silenced. Revelation 12.
26. Up at 7.30. Still beautiful weather. Rumours that Turkey has signed a separate peace. Heard that leave to England is granted. Got a little more rations today. Letter from Ethel (*sister in law*). Revelation 13.
27. Nice weather. Aeroplanes active, heavy bombardments by both sides started by us at 9pm. Six casualties on our side. Had to carry Ben P-----(?) four miles, arrived home 5.30am Frid. Revelation 14.
28. Still beautiful weather. Many aeroplanes about. Artillery drill 6pm. No casualties on our side. Our trench mortar to fire tonight. Expect trouble. Revelation 15.
29. Managed to snatch a little sleep last night. Up about 7am and enjoyed a good drink of tea from Ian. He has been good to me in this relief and as we have been short of rations his tea has always been welcome. The weather is still beautiful. Relieved 11pm by 5th Btn. Got to Fort Romper 1.30am. Of course no arrangements had been made for us. Pat up with cooks. Enjoyed a good sleep. Revelation 16.
30. Sun. Up about 9am. Ian gave Pat and I tea. Billeted in barn. Gave the cook a hand and he asked me to stop there for good. Serg. Bulch is to see about it. Revelation 17.

May

1. Up about 5.15. Very busy all day. Weather still beautiful. Light shower at midday. Four aeroplanes. Revelation 18.
2. Up at 6.30. Plenty to do today. Had a royal feed at tea time. Made -----(?) puff which the lads enjoyed. Went for a walk after tea. Revelation 19.
3. Reported to A Coy at 10 last night with fatigue party. 2am till noon. Cooked in -----(?) Very tired at night. Revelation 20.
4. Up 6 o'clock. Usual days cooking slight showers. Aeroplanes very active. Rations very short. Four bearers go out with fatigue party every day to make trenches. Revelation 21.
5. Up 5.30. Went through the usual day's work. Goldie is away often and leaves things very much to me. Kirk transferred to prisoners. Weather nice, cold wind. Revelation 22.
6. The weather still continues nice, interrupted by occasional showers. Usual day's work. The men tried to push me into going out again to the trenches, but I saw the doctor and was exempt, the selfishness of the men has surprised me, they have little enough to do. Hamilton leads them on a lot. 20th Btn shelled. Stand to 8.30 -10.30. Matthew 12.
7. CP in the afternoon by Mr. Stewart. He was very good; he is in good health. Cooked as usual. Weather was very nice. Went for a walk with W.D. Mark 11.
8. Up 6am. W.D. left to be billeting officer at Stepswick. He has been treated very unfairly. Usual days work. Showery weather. Wrote a few letters. John 6.
9. Usual days work. Rained nearly all day. Very few aeroplanes seen and little firing heard the past few days. Letter from Mrs. Hamilton. Psalm 19.
10. Went down to Erquingham about 6km away for a bath, which was much enjoyed. Worked all afternoon. Proverbs 6.
11. Did not get up till 7am this morning. Goldie got the breakfast. Aeroplanes very active and heavily shelled. Went for a walk with I.C. after tea. Isaiah 24.
12. Up about 6am. Usual days work. Paid 4 Francs. Boys very merry this evening. Wrote letters home to May. Weather very nice. Acts 6.
13. Up fairly early. Usual days work. Drilling all day. The ground has become sloppy. There has been very little firing of late. Furphies are numerous A big -----(?) get published every day but nothing official. Luke 12.
14. Sun. CP. in morning, service by Capt Stewart. Very good service. Usual days work in the afternoon. Still rather wet weather. John 14.
15. Fine day today. Aeroplanes very active. Usual days work. Went for a walk to canteen after tea. Letters come in drib and drabs. Matthew 7.
16. Still very fine weather. A little more shooting of late. Work still goes on as usual. One of our planes had to descend for mail from here rose after 3 hours. Acts 17.
17. Usual days work, fine weather. Went to canteen after tea. Alarm 7.30pm. Had to get up at 1am to cook MG breakfast, bit of a brawl with Frenchman over water. 1 John 1.
18. Fine weather aeroplanes active. Sam joined the scouts. Goldie to report to B.H.Q. 1pm to be away several days. Sam to be my mate. Several letters from home. Frank, Ethel extra good. Psalm 12.

19. Frid. Ian and I get on well together. Still fine weather, aeroplanes active. More shelling heard from Flusbeau(?) direction. John 2.
20. Weather still fine. French seem to be holding tight at Verdun. Many stories of great German losses, but we have learnt not to believe anything except it is published official. Furphies very numerous. John 6.
21. Sun. There are many rumours about as to where we are to go. Some say Boulogne & Calais etc. But we must just wait till the last moment to be certain. John 4.
22. Colonel Knox had gone away ill, he had not got over the spill he had. GC gone with him. He has gone on leave to get married. John 5.
23. Weather very nice. Heavy bombardment around Armentieres supply district. Aeroplanes very active. Few stray letters. John 6.
24. Goldie returned. Had been cooking as a wood clop. 2nd Australian Division had highest percentage of medics. John 7
25. Sam will be staying on with Goldie. He is better there than in the company. I think he has been wanting to get back to HQ. John 8.
26. Last night Sam gave me his whole history. He is not as fortunate as I in having had a good home. He was terribly cut up about it. John 9.
27. George C returned few days ago. He was not allowed to go away as it is against army orders for any officer under the rank of Brigadier to have a batman. The Colonel seems pretty crook. Major Letters, who brought 24 Btn away to be provisionally in command. John 10.
28. Sun. There is some talk of the instruments coming. I hope it is true as things are rather monotonous. Weather still the best. John 4.
29. We know for certain that men of the 2nd ----(?) are going away on leave before men who have been all through. This points to favouritism. John 8.
30. Went out with fatigue party last night about 10 mile march Carrol, D----(?).hit believe he had a bullet worked into his heart. John 13.
31. Last day of Johnson & Hollingsworth trials. Expect them to get time over their misdeeds. Had to go to Bois Grennier for their CM. John 14.

June

1. Thurs. Instruments have arrived in good form. Have a lot of Bulch's new music amongst it which are some very good pieces. Had a blow tonight. Hughes & Fisher inspected us. John 15.
2. With fatigue party again last night, arrived home 8am this morning. Weather still grand. Heard lecture by Gipsev Smith, very interesting. Mail from home. John 6.
3. Letter from home very interesting indeed. Sorry to notice that Frank is so eager, but expect it will be alright. Will drop him the hint. Heard Gipsev Smith again. He is a great man. Will try to make up something for the class out of his sermons. John 17.
4. Sun. Gipsev Smith took CP. Played at bayonet drill competition, won by D Coy. Sam to go on leave in a week. Wrote letters. John 18.
5. The weather has been rather cold & rainy for the last few days. BP morning & afternoon in the evening. John 19.

6. Rumours of many Russians victories against the Austrians. One of our balloons broke from its moorings and was lost. The two observers descended in parachutes, one lost. John 20.
7. Russians have taken 41000 prisoners. The Crown Prince is amongst them as rumour has it. Kaiser supposed to be dead. Weather slightly better. John 4.
8. Thurs. Aeroplanes very active. Had a good view of a big squadron. Some good playing. Have full strength of big naval battles. We seem to have had a good win. 1 John 1.
9. We go into the trenches tomorrow. MGS signs and scouts have moved off. Sam went with scouts. M Division has been sent away as unfit. 1 John 2.J.
10. Moved off from headquarters at 8.30am, had a long march to trenches and took over from 26th Btn. We are sorted in a salient(?). The nearest enemy lines are fifty yards away. Things seem fairly quiet here, but heavy bombardment can be heard from the direction of Ypres. Russians doing exceptionally well. 1 John 3.
- 11 Sun. Had very little sleep last night. Three more men sent to my station. I have been put in charge as no AM officer allowed in the trenches beyond supports. 2 John.
12. Was called out last night at 12 to go over to get a man shot on patrol. Had a long carry to MO. Bombardment at Ypres continues. Very wet weather. 1 Peter 1 verses 19 & 23.
13. Still wet and dusty. Heavy bombardment on right flank, 12 am bombardment at Ypres continues. Broken building nearby shelled 11.30am. Ca----(?) killed, Womsley wounded. 1 Peter 2.
14. Weather brighter today. Cannonading at Ypres continues. Start about 11pm. ----(?) shot through head, died on way to doctor. 1 Peter 3.
15. Weather still bright. Very heavy bombardment at Ypres. Germans sent over a few bombs aerial torpedoes. We replied with rifle grenades. 1 Peter 4.
16. Weather still bright. Bombardment at Ypres continues. Stand to 12 midnight. Purcell and Carrol hit, Purcell went away. Bombarding around Armentieres. 1 Peter 5.
17. Fine weather today. Aeroplanes very active. Russians have 152,000 (?) prisoners and are advancing. Eleven casualties tonight caused by bombs and aerial torpedoes. Serg. Bailley slightly wounded. We had a very hard night's work. The -----(?) and duckboards hinder us a lot. Metcalf dead. Three others reported dead. 2 Peter 1.
18. Sun. Fine weather. Bombarding on left about 10pm. Our mortars played on German lines who replied, one casualty. They-----(?) died at end of ----(?). 2 Peter 2.
19. Weather still fine. German guns open onto -----(?) 6pm. Heavy shelling by both sides for 2 hours, 8 casualties, Serg Bulch fractured skull, Capt Hillman, Serg Bently dead, Serg. ----(?) wounded. 2 Peter 3.
20. Fine weather several aeroplanes up, slight shelling by both sides 4am. Rest of day very quiet. Relieved by 22nd 2am. Reached our dug outs (4th line) 3am. Light bombardment by enemy. Matthew 1.
21. Woke up 11am. Breakfast and dinner. Slight shelling against our positions to our rear. We replied. Heavy shelling again same position 4pm. No damage on our

side. Serg. Bulch dead. Matthew 2

22. Fine weather rather warm. Aeroplanes very active. Shelling very consistent on both sides. Paid 40Fr. 12 minutes bombardments at 11pm. Matt. 3.

23. 19th Birthday. Went along to see Sam. Thunder storm at 4pm. over at 4.30. Another bombardment tonight. Artillery being relieved by 4th Div. Some talk of us going back. Rumours of riots in Germany. Matt. 4.

24. Received letters from home last night. Still raining slightly. Intermittent shelling on the right. We continued shelling the enemy. The idea is to try and keep the enemy from moving their guns and going to other fronts. Russians still doing well.

Matthew 5.

25. Sun. Marched down to Erguirnham for a bath, were turned back as there were no baths on Sunday. Spent the day at Armentieres. Matthew 6.

26. Rain slightly off and on. Four of our Machines brought down light balloons. Huns shelled us continually at night. We gave them plenty back. Matthew 7

27. Went down to baths and had a grand wash. Captain Stewart gone back home. Did not know until it was too late to see him. Weather still rather rainy. Matt. 8.

28. Did not get up until after dinner. Raining off and on in morning. Much artillery firing. Sunny in afternoons. Wrote letters. Burke hit in right hand. Matt. 9.

29. Fine weather. Squadron of fifteen aeroplanes in direction of Lille Raid by 6th Brigade at 12pm, five prisoners taken. Very successful. Parkes hit. Matt.10.

30. We were shelled and a few wounded last night. The German lines were full of dead, we were only four minutes in the trenches. Took over from the 22nd at 8pm. Matt.11.

July

1. Sat. Fine weather. Raid carried out by 4th. Brigade. We were heavily shelled. SM Anderson wounded, Cpl. Winstonly had a bad shell shock. The six bearers in the salient want to be relieved. It's up to them to do as we do and stick to their job. Kent had too much to say, he wants stripes. Matt. 12.

2. Sun. Fine weather. A squadron of 17 planes flew over in the direction of Lille. Franco-British advance. Little bombardment. Russians have 27,000 prisoners. Matt. 13.

3. Fine weather. British and French advancing. To be relieved tonight. Bombardment 10 am. About 10 casualties. Gardiner wounded, Trigg (?) dead. Got out at 5pm. Matt. 14.

4. Raining heavily. Got to Erquirham 7am. Had breakfast ~ 10am Transports carried our packs to Stienwick 4pm. Went straight to bed. Very tired. Matt.15.

5. Rained slightly. Had to go back to the companies to which we were attached. Allies still doing well. W. Dalachy missing. Matt. 16.

6. Rain still about. The country here is not so knocked about as around Armentieres. Some splendid crops and plenty of fruit about. Hope to be able to go into Stienwick. Matt. 17.

7. Breakfast steak and tea. Payed 40 Fr. Got instruments from QM store. Walked to Stienwick and had feed. No rain today. Matt. 18.

8. Orders to pack up and move. Took in instrument pack at 3pm. Arrive

Iritustiene(?) passed through Mieus(?) and billeted in farm house 2 miles the other side. Turned in very tired. Not very anxious for tomorrow as we had our packs as well as stretchers. Slept in farm was often washing our feet which was a great relief. Matt. 19.

9. Sunday Fell in 9am, marched in direction of St Omer through Piadelles, Bore, Hazebrouck, lunch, Eblingham,...?..., billet in house built in 1627. Good nights rest. Matt. 20.

10. Blankets packed, passed Farbing, lunch, arrived Heurengham, billeted at farm house 4pm till 1.50am on the 11th, had breakfast and marched off 4.20am passed through Belgius.?..., passed very old church Blindraquis to station Wigirams, entrained to unknown destination, heading towards Calais, Bouloque, Etaples, Amiens, detrained..?.... Matt. 21,22.

12. Marched here last night Airly...?.... 12 miles marched arrived 2pm. Walked around town all day. Very dead and alive place, no one here. Very well billeted.

13. Thurs. Men had to drill today. A few more reinforcements arrived. We spent the day around the town, not much to see but will do us for the while. Cavalry went up to the trenches but had to come back. Matt. 23.

14. Went down to get photographs, then walked around town. After dinner went as far as the next village with Bennett. Got photos, hope they will like them at home, but don't know when I can get them away. Matt 24.

15. Walked around the town as usual. Men had to get out on parade. British and French advance still continues. People here very hopeful for an early finish to the war. Popular opinion is October, Spent the evening with Mdm Zenoble. They have been very kind to us during our stay here. Matt. 25.

16. Sun. Orders to move at 10.30. Passed aerodrome had dinner. Billeted at Raineville 2pm. Filthy place, people not at all hospitable. Town very slow. Matt.26.

17. Rained during the night. Part of 23rd marched through toward Albert. Rained a lot during the afternoon. Got some letters and photos away. Matt. 27.

18. French people going to Mass. Move off at 11am, roads very sloppy. Marched about 5 miles and had dinner. Then came on to Paucherville which is the rail head. Many German and British wounded. Matt. 28.

19. At HQ all day with Sam and FB. Went for a walk after tea. Too late for canteen. Paid 40 Francs. Nothing further about the new orders. Mark 1. 3.

20. Moved off 9.30, had two spells in the day, arrived at Teatvilliers midday. Had a wash and went to Archeaux. Canteens and German prisoners. Mark 2.

21. The people here are very independent and are most pro German. They will not even give us water. Johnson(who has just done 90 days) has been drinking again and has been jugged. Mark 3

22 We got our instruments last night. Hays to be BM. R Bendt refuses to play. Much dissatisfaction. Bendt is the man that we want for BM. Plenty of contrary orders this morning, don't know what to do. Finally decided to follow the company out and sit there. Route march in afternoon. Hays is too slow to get out of his own way. He does not seem to be doing anything at all to get the band going. Mark 4.

23. Sun. Had orders to do BP, but that is messed up again. Many rumours about 4th Division Brigade. 1st Division CP. Bendt got orders to start the band, had a practice. Mark 5.

24. BP. Playing well under the conditions, but can't get enough solo comets. Played companies off parade morning and afternoon. Programme after tea. Mark 6.
25. Played Battalion out. Had a little practice. In evening we played at a concert given by the ASS. It was a very good turn out and was enjoyed by all. Mark 7
26. Up 3.30am moved off at 4.45am. Reached Albert 7am. Bivouaced in open. Moved off at 10am through Albert. Camped in old German trenches near a large crater. Slept fairly well. Mark 8.
27. Had breakfast, issued with 48hr rations. Moved to supports 11.30. Shelling very consistent 22nd and 24th Bts are having many casualties. No word of going in yet. Mark 9.
28. Shelling not so heavy this morning expect to go in tonight. Moved in 10pm reached the spot we had to advance from in no man's land 12.00 advanced
29. 12.20 many casualties. I sent the other three bearers back with some wounded and they were unable to return. I must have bandaged over 50 men. By morning we had the new line dug. Through some mistake the 7th Brigade retired. We had to dig another line to link up with supports.
30. Sun. Relieved Sat. 29th at 8pm. The bearers had 7 casualties. The remainder of us are unable to work on account of our backs. We are now in reserves. The men have to go on ration fatigue and in the night they have to dig a new line for the next advance. The MD has seen the Brigadier and the 23rd have been put in reserves as they had so many casualties.

From this point the diary ceases to be divided into precise days, only a general indication of the dates will be given.

August

1. Tues. Went into reserves for 2 days. We have been expecting to charge every night, but it is always put off. The Colonel has been wounded. We got 90 reinforcements for the Battalion.

I got hit in the knee with a lump of shell. It bruised my leg badly and I had to see the Doctor. He put me off duty. The remainder of the 23rd went into reserves for the 22nd and 24th who charged the night of the 4th. Many prisoners have passed through and our lads have taken two lines which are the last of the Germans defence.

They promised to have us relieved straight away. I have been down at the cookers for the last two days. Reg and I went out through Albert to the QM Stores and slept there that night. Monday morning we marched to Warley Baillon where we were billeted. We got another batch of reinforcements, the battalion is now about 750 strong. Several of the sergeants have been promoted to lieutenants and lieutenants to Captains. Major Beasner is in command (Feters was wounded at HQ) Major Smith is 2nd in Command.

The lads are in good spirits, but badly in need of a rest. S Doak and Benner returned. Underwood has gone to England with a weak heart, we don't expect to see him again. We had a blow last night and got on fairly well with the help of some of 21st. Bob Jane is at Halpstone(?).

I have been unable to write the incidents day by day, we have been too occupied. But

this is the ...?~

Proceeded to Lavicon and bivouaced under trees. Proceeded next day to Berteaucourt. Very good billets. Started band and doing well with three of 21st Bt. Played the Battalion to and from parade every morning and afternoon and practised whilst they were drilling.

Three of us got down to Amiens and spent two good days. The Cathedral is beautiful. The French have paid 1 million Franc indemnity on it but have it sandbagged to be sure. The city itself is well laid out and very well situated. We spent a very good time. I managed to get several letters away but could not answer all I have received. So long as mother and May get one every mail everything will be alright.

The 15th (Aug) was Reg Batt. birthday and we had a bit of a blow out. There was a boxing tournament going on at Canaples and we had to go there to play I caught sight of Miller but could not speak to him. General Legge gave us a speech and congratulated us on our work. He had a photo taken of our band. We spent a very enjoyable evening in Berteaucourt for the last night. We expect to start on our way tomorrow.

Moved off to Canaples 10.30. Dinner just the other side of Canaples. Reached...?....?.. Slept out in the open. Rained towards morning and we were drenched. Moved off again 8am and reached ...?... at 11.30, very good billet. Played in afternoon and evening. Moved off towards...?... 10pm and billeted in huts this side. CP attended by General Birdwood and Legge. Gave us plenty of blowing up and presented medals for Armentieres. Again thanked the S.B's in their work and shook hands with us all. Saw H Matthews in ...?.

S. Owens received a cable to say his mother was seriously ill and to come home. He applied for leave which was delayed for two days owing to so much red tape at HQ. His leave was granted but not till he had got another cable to say his mother was dead.

Packs sent in 7am. Moved off 12.30. Arrived at Albert 8pm. Camped in open. Rained slightly during the night but we had our sheets for cover. Breakfast 4.30. moved off to Sausage Valley 6am. Moved into trenches 2pm. Took up on advanced position ahead of the second line we took. The communication trenches are very shallow. We had heavy casualties as soon as we got in. 12 men wounded with one shell.

Approx. August 24. Things quietened a little only an occasional casualty. The German trenches were a 1000 yards away. There are many dead lying about both Hun and British. To get into them one had to crawl across a partially buried Hun. The 26th Btn. charged but through some mistake were cut up. The number of enemy holding the position must have been underestimated. Bartlett and Temple were both killed. We were to be relieved at 4am, but it was 10am before we started to move. The gap was blocked and we were nearly caught in a barrage of fire. We got to Albert about midday and had a fairly comfortable billet.

We were mud from head to foot with the rain and slush that half filled the gaps. I managed to dry my things a bit, although it rained on and off all night. Monday we moved to Warloy (?). Moved off at 9am and reached Kirissart at 12.00. Billets not too good. Expect pay today. Rained fairly heavy all day, roads in a very bad

condition.

Moved off 7am, rained all the while we were on the march, reached Bernaville 1pm. Very cold billet. Rained cleared off 6pm. Nothing in the town. Walked to Canoples for bread.

Aug. 31. Bright day, roads still sloppy, no word of moving. General Birdwood presented more colours to 6th Brigade. Says we are to go to a quiet part of the line.

September

1. Walked to Condos to canteen then to Doullens and Beanvak(?). Had a good time and plenty of tucker, caught by Tommy MP. but got away.
2. Spent the day in fear of having to go on the carpet as we were seen by the CO. yesterday, but nothing was said. Dunn is still at Reg. to get the band going, but we can do nothing about that. Sid has gone to hospital. We can't expect to have the 21st men always.
3. Reveille at 4.30, moved off at 6am to Giriancourt, had a comfortable march, had fairly good billets. Expect to entrain shortly.
4. Walked to Beauval(?) and had a fairly good time, 5th Brigade are not yet moved. No word of us going yet.
5. Raining heavily, roads in very bad state. Many wounded coming into clearing station near here, Germans among them.
6. Reveille at 3.30 moved off 5am to Doullens, entrained at 6.30. Detrained at 12.00 at marched 7 miles through Poperinge to huts 7 miles behind Ypres.
7. Company had to go back to fatigue at Proven. Weather still of the best. Did a little washing and went to YMCA in evening, good concert.
8. Still lovely weather, B Coy badly defeated by Tommies at cricket. Spent another enjoyable evening at YMCA concert by 21st Bn.
9. Played with HQ against C Coy. Had the luck to carry my bat at 33. We won with an easy margin. Good concert at YMCA, but were annoyed by those behind the canteen. Have to play for brigade CP tomorrow.
10. Sun. General Birdwood presented some more colours. Capt Rentoul gave a very inappropriate sermon. Going to trenches on Thursday night.
11. Played football with Battalion against brigade. Had another win. Phillips played very well also Gardner and Kirkwood.
12. Wrote letters at YMCA. Cricket match between Englishmen and 6th Brigade resulted in a win for us by 9 wickets. Have bowled very well.
13. Down at YM all day. Packed up and moved off at 6pm, took train to Ypres and slept in a ruined convent. City very much knocked about.
14. Went to canteen and brought some stores to take in. Moved into trenches 8pm. Road very slippery. No duck boards or communication gaps.
15. The trenches are very shallow. Fritz is above us and about 1000 yards away. We have strong holds and strong posts in front.
16. Raining off and on all day. The duckboards were well off the ground, so the trench is not very muddy. Our hang out is warm and dry. Reg and I are very comfy. George D came in last night ...?... Besnier(?) are at the strong hold.
17. Sun. Still raining nothing to do but read and write letters. Rations rather light.

18. Raining continually all night. Bit of a stunt by Tommies, but got no shells near us.
19. Still raining. Had to take a man out with a sprained ankle. Track very muddy and slippery. Got back about 11pm.
20. The leave to be granted is to one man per company every four days. Hope to get away soon. Relief tomorrow. Still raining.
21. Relieved and went into billets at Ypres in a hospital that is sadly knocked about. Ten patients and four nurses were killed in this hospital during the bombardment.
22. We were to go back to Toronto (?) but have to put in a week in reserves first. Ypres is in a very dilapidated state. None of the houses are habitable. The Gloth Hall is in ruins but is still a main center for big shells. The Huns are after an observation post that is in the towers.
24. The lads go on fatigue every evening making trenches. The party of bearers go in with them. There are several canteens in the town and we are not doing badly.
25. We relieved the 22 Batt. after being in reserve. We have to do a month up here before going back to Toronto. The 21st & 22nd are having a royal time back there. It generally falls to us to get the heavy work.
27. This time the company is in support and have to carry rations to the frontline every night. We had a very good time.
28. After another week we were again relieved by the 22nd and went through the same routine again at Ypres.
29. We again went into the front line after 6 days. We are on the extreme right of the battalion. The trenches are very shallow, only 2 or 3 feet high in places.
30. No movement is allowed during the day time. We did eight days in this turn and were relieved by some Tommies. We went straight to the train and went to the nearest station to Toronto. We were all ringing wet as the rain was coming down in torrents.

October

1. We should have been met by guards but they were missing and as no one knew the way we were soon lost in the rain.
2. After about 2 hours vain searching, we came on a picture hall, where we camped for the night. The next morning we found our camp was only a half a mile away. That day was spent in drying our clothes.
4. Four of us procured a pass to Poperinge where we spent a very enjoyable day. Next day we moved off to billets about 5 miles past Steenvoorde. It was a fairly long march and we were fairly tired after it. Next day we marched into Steenvoorde to hear some conscriptionists lecture.
7. They were very surprised to find that the lads were against conscription and could hardly believe half we told them. Next day we moved off to billets near Anake where we stayed the night. Next day we entrained & travelled to Airly(?). We had another 5 mile march to a small village where we stopped two days.
8. From here we travelled by French buses to Beurri where we stayed a week. During our stay we had leave to Ameins for a day & had a good time.

November

We moved off on Saturday 4th to trenches some miles beyond Fleurs.

November 5. We are in support to 22nd Battalion. There is no trench built but the lads are making the best of the shell holes. Six of us are in a German dugout.

6. Sun. Raining continuously. Four 'men killed last night and several wounded. The dressing shed is only about 200 yards away. Wound in left arm 6pm.

7. I had a big walk to the field ambulance. After travelling by car for 6 hours. I reached 28th CCS at daybreak, from there entrained to Etaples, 4th General hospital 9pm.

8. Had wound dressed and marched to go before the CO tomorrow. Wound is not bad and beds very are comfortable. Mostly Tommies here.

9. Wound dressed. To go before CO at 12.00. Booked for England but don't expect to get away for some time. A small party went this morning.

10. Fine weather, nothing at all to do. Find the time drags very much.

11. A party of 50 left for England at 1am this morning. We were aroused about 4am this morning and sent to Etaples to the train from there to Calais, where we stayed all night as we were late for the boat.

12. Got on the boat at 9am. Left Calais 11.15, arrived Dover 12.30. Entrained and arrived at Edmenton 6.30. Private cars took us to the hospital 7pm.

13. Stayed in bed all day splendid food and plenty of it. All very kind to us. Four Australians besides myself.

14. Got up in the evening after tea to go to a concert in the hall attached to hospital.

15. Went for a walk up the street. Seems to be a fairly busy place. Rather a nice town.

16. Went to a whist drive, got home about 8pm. Spent a very enjoyable evening.

17. Helped nurse with dressings etc. she teaches quite a lot. I have to do the testing every morning.

18. Operated on 1pm. Came round 2.15, felt alright. Arm a little sore owing to the tight bandaging. They have put a splint on so as the stitches will not be disturbed.

19. Sun. Felt very well. Would not allow me out until tomorrow. Many visitors to other patients.

20. Got up for a while in evening. Have been eating like a horse since the operation.

21. My arm is not to be touched till Saturday to give the stiches time to knit.

22. Went for a walk up town. Beautiful weather, but rather cold. Little snow fell.

23. Good concert given by artist from theatre in Tottenham. Took nurse over and had a good time.

24. Went to theatre party at Edmenton Empire Play, rather poor, but enjoyed myself well enough.

25. Went to a dance given in aid of the hospital. Spent a most enjoyable evening. Met some very interesting people. Every one was most enthusiastic. Very patriotic feeling exists here.

26. Sun. Went for a walk with two ladies I met last night and spent an enjoyable afternoon. Stiches taken out.

27. Went up the street and to pictures in afternoon. Weather rather dull and cold.

28. Stayed in all day and helped nurse. Met a chaplain from home and had a good

talk.

29. Shifted into side ward. Weather dull. helped nurse who showed me some good tests.

30. Helped with dressings. Concert by Wood Green orchestra. Not too bad.

At this point the diary ceases. I do not know his movements after recovering from this wound. At the time of putting this diary together all his brothers have died.. What we do know is that when he returned home to his family in Australia, he continued to suffer from the effects of gas. This is not mentioned in the diary, which makes me wonder whether he returned to the front and that's when he was affected. I do not know of the existence of any other diary records. He never really recovered and died on 23th. September 1923. He was 27 years. He never did marry.

Stuart Reid
"Kadumbra"
RMB 4665
Highlands 3660